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T H O U G H T S

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R E L A T I V E T O

F A I T H I N J E S U S C H R I S T ;

I N W H I C H

MR. ANDREW FULLER's leading Propositions
on that Subject are considered.

By J O H N M A R T I N. K

We know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully.
2 Tim. i. 8.

P A R T I. all

L O N D O N :

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AND Mr. MURRAY, PRINCES-STREET, SOHO.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

T H O U G H T

ON THE

D U T Y

OF A

WARRIOR

BY

ANDREW WILKINSON

OF THE

JOHN MARY

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ABBREVIATIONS.

TREAT. Mr. Fuller's Treatise.

DEF. Mr. Fuller's Defence of his Treatise.

REM. Mr. Button's Remarks on Mr.
Fuller's Treatise.

OBSERV. Mr. Taylor's Observations on Mr.
Fuller's Treatise.

*OBSERV. Mr. Taylor's Observations on Mr.
Fuller's Reply.

LETT. Letter from Philip Withers, D. D.
to the Rev. Andrew Fuller.

DECLARATION

I, John Doe, of the County of Albany, State of New York, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original of the same, as the same appears from the records of the said County of Albany, State of New York.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the said County of Albany, at the City of Albany, this 1st day of January, A.D. 1901.

John Doe
County Clerk

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INTRODUCTION.

OUR first temptation was to be raised above the condition of humanity: and from that period to the present, what is the duty of man, has been, in every age, disputed.

At the close of the last century, a book was published, and received by many with great applause, called *The whole duty of man*; which is yet thought by some, to be a kind of standard book on religious obligation. Of more recent date another book was published, the title of which is, *The new whole duty of man*; and still more recently, a third has appeared, which the authour has called, *The complete duty of man*.

These treatises contain but a small part of the well intended labours of CHURCHMEN to fix the bounds of our duty, and to inform us what is the nature, and should be the practice of christian piety.—*Dissenters* have not been unemployed on these subjects, nor have they been employed in vain.

More than forty years ago, what then obtained the name of *the modern question*, became a popular

debate. The question was, “ Is saving faith in
 “ Christ a duty required by the moral law, of all
 “ those who live under the gospel revelation ? ”
 On this question, and on what was connected
 with it, our duty, in reference to revelation, was
 perhaps, as ably argued as might have been
 expected. However, that dispute has long since
 died away; and was in a great measure forgotten,
 when a pious authour ^a thought proper to renew
 the controversy, by a TREATISE which has this
 title, *The Gospel of Christ worthy of all Acceptation*;
 and, to keep it up, by his DEFENCE of that
 TREATISE, which contains a reply to REMARKS
 and OBSERVATIONS which have been made upon
 it.

In the preface before his TREATISE, there is an
 invitation^b which does him honour; but there is
 also, in the same preface, an alarming sentence,^c
 which is not to his credit.—If dispassionate and
 just reflection were always the same, who that
 reads Mr. Fuller’s alarming decision, (which in
 fact, amounts to this, that to oppose his leading
 sentiments would be to quarrel with the Al-
 mighty, who that reads this) would venture to
 accept of his subsequent invitation?—Yet some
 have had such courage. What respect they have
 obtained from our authour for so doing, is probably
 unenvied; and what thanks this additional atten-
 tion

^a Mr. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, in Northamp-
 tonshire.

^b P. xii.

P. vii.

tion to his own request may possibly procure, is yet unknown.

Whoever wishes any controversy to terminate in favour of truth, cannot be reluctant to be informed of a turning point: but it is unpleasant when the report of such a favour ends in disappointment.—What it was that could lead Mr. Fuller to imagine, that an attention to the awful controversy that has in all ages subsisted between God and a wicked world, would be of such consequence in the present debate, he is best able to determine.—Conjecture is not certainty. But, it is well known, in order to *defeat*, some have endeavoured to *deter*.

Whether any thing Mr. Fuller has attempted to establish, will be much affected by this reply, they who are inclined to read it have a right to decide for themselves. But should any be of opinion, that the *wiser* part would be not to read it, he may rest satisfied, that the wisdom of his resolution is ~~not~~ very likely to be disputed.

If Mr. Fuller be not ~~treated~~ with due respect in the following pages, it is for want of judgment; nor should the reader be surprised if, in a few instances, wisdom should seem to be wanting; for, what is *always* due to Mr. Fuller as a disputant, it must be confessed, is not *very* easy to be decided.—Should our authour be hurt that so much of his TREATISE and DEFENCE appears to be overlooked, when he recollects in what manner he himself

thought it most prudent to answer one of his friends^d it is presumed, he will not imagine that the present *mode* of reply was preferred for want of due respect. It may yield him some satisfaction to remember, that what is omitted cannot be misrepresented: and, if by declining a labour that would increase the fatigue of the reader, were it pursued, a writer can as well accomplish his intention, it only remains to be considered what that is, and whether it be worth the reader's notice. What is here intended, (should this treatise ever be completed,) the title page and table of contents have told: but how far that plan is happily conceived, or successfully executed, is now in part, submitted to men of understanding.

It will be some consolation, (nor is much more expected,) if what is here produced, should repress the offensive levity and confidence of some, in propagating those opinions which are here opposed. Should they still retain their resolution to defend them, yet, if they are brought to perceive that a *little* more may be said against their favourite notions than they have been wont, or indeed, willing to apprehend, they will probably hold with greater caution, and with better temper, their leading peculiarities.—Could so much be gained, peace and truth would, in some measure, be promoted by this attempt; the hope of which, has surmounted every unpleasing apprehension.

THOUGHTS

^d Mr. Dan Taylor.

T H O U G H T S

O N T H E

D U T Y O F M A N, &c.

P A R T I.

DISAPPROBATION OF MR. FULLER'S LEADING
PROPOSITIONS ON THE DUTY OF MAN.

S E C T. I.

His leading propositions considered as OBSCURE.

IN Mr. Fuller's treatise there are the following propositions:

PROP. I. "Faith in Christ is commanded in the
" scriptures to unconverted sinners.

PROP. II. " Every man is bound cordially to re-
" ceive, and heartily to approve, whatever God
" reveals.

PROP. III. " The gospel, though it be no law,
 " but a message of pure grace, yet virtually
 " requires such an obedience to it which in-
 " cludes saving faith.

PROP. IV. " The want of faith in Christ is af-
 " cribed in the scriptures to men's depravity,
 " and is itself there represented as a heinous
 " sin.

PROP. V. " God has threatened and inflicted the
 " most awful punishments on men for their
 " not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

PROP. VI. " Seeing other graces, or spiritual
 " dispositions, with which salvation is con-
 " nected, are represented as the duties of men
 " in general, there is no reason why faith
 " should not be the same."

IT is thought that want of method, that intro-
 ducing nearly the same ideas under different words,
 and that an embarrassed style, have diffused obscurity
 over the sense of these propositions in their first
 appearance: but, in their explanation and defence,
 the shades of obscurity seem to be much augment-
 ed. What has contributed to produce such per-
 plexity in our authour's composition, are supposed
 to be, in a great measure, the following impro-
 prieties:

I. *The*

I. *The ambiguity in the TITLE of his TREATISE, which is frequently repeated.*

In the title of Mr. Fuller's TREATISE, we read *of the obligations of men fully to credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known.* But, how are we to determine with tolerable precision, when any person, in Mr. Fuller's opinion, arrives to *manhood*? Is this point to be settled by the number of his years, the extent of his capacity, by his moral endowments, or by any other method?—This question will not be thought frivolous, when it is considered how much our authour (as a controversial writer) requires *every* man to perform while *unregenerate*; on what penalty for non-performance, on the one hand, and, on the other, how little he has said of the extent of their duty, or of their obligation to perform it, who are not yet advanced beyond the state of *childhood* and of *youth*.—It is confessed, that the terms *man*, *men*, *every man*, and *all men*, in common use, do not need any explanation; but when an uncommon weight is laid on such words, the sense in which they are so used, should be as determinate as possible.

II. *The TIME in which our SUPPOSED duty is to be performed.*

Where obligations are numerous, of wide extent, and of great importance, the *time* which is allowed to fulfil such obligations, is an article of great

great moment. But, is this article so managed by our authour as to prevent *obscurity*? Is there that due attention to the various conditions, circumstances and capacities of men that might have been expected? Nay, does he not frequently insist, that what is *spiritual* and *supernatural*, is the duty of *all* men; and assert, that what it is their duty to *be*, to *have*, and *do*, is the *effect* of that influence which is as *sovereign* in its grant, as in its nature it is *divine*?

In the most cautious^a page, on the article of *time* to perform our supposed duty, we have but slender and dubious information. “*Perhaps*,” says our authour, “some regard ought to be paid “to the *order* of things.—It would be very strange “for any one of us thus to address another, *Be perfectly holy, now, this moment*.”—It would be very strange, indeed, if *some* were to use such language; but, if either Mr. Fuller, or his friends, should adopt it, who could wonder? For, on his sentiments, what is any unregenerate man to wait for? Divine assistance? How can that be? since he supposes the whole compass of their duty *ought* to be done without it; and, that it *would* be done, were they as *willing* as they are ABLE. Yes, “^b whatever a person *is*, or *does*, in respect to “*spiritual* dispositions and exercises, when he is “*regenerated*, we think,” (says our authour and his abettors) “it is *no more* than what he ought to have “*been*

^a P. 164.^b P. 131.

“ *been and done*, PRIOR to that period, as well as
 “ at the time.”—This makes his former caution
 of being holy, *now, this moment*, very obscure :
 but, when it is recollected that our authour says,
 that the gospel ^c *requires*, that they who are in a
 state of rebellion to God, without any excep-
 tion, (while in that unregenerate and rebellious
 state) should give it a cordial reception, that they
 should *immediately* lay down all arms of hostility,
 entirely submit to mercy, cordially acquiesce in all
 its designs, and intreat to be of the number of
 those that shall be reclaimed by it, obscurity is
 then ripened into contradiction ; and both, as far
 as they can be understood, seem to contain some-
 thing so *anti-evangelical*, that it is as remote from
glad tidings as it is distant from fact.—It is true,
 our authour is sometimes disposed to admit, that
 “ ^d all sorts of acts and exercises, do *necessarily*
 “ arise from their *principles* ; that there are some
 “ things, such as loving God and holiness, which
 “ cannot be *done* without the party being truly
 “ gracious ; and some things which cannot be
 “ *believed* in reality, without constituting the
 “ party a true believer.”—But does this make
 the matter less *obscure* ? For, is it the duty of
every man to be *truly* gracious, and, to CONSTIT-
 TUTE HIMSELF *a true believer* ?—If this be the
 duty of the unregenerate to *perform*, (and, in every
 thing which is, in any state, our *duty*, it is
 something

^c P. 58.^d P. 4, 13, 14.

Something to be *done* by us,) it must be their duty to *desire*, and *endeavour* to perform it; but, can he who is of this opinion, much admire that grace which bringeth salvation?

III. *Not saying by what means our SUPPOSED duties may be accomplished.*

This is the more remarkable, since when Mr. Fuller gives his opinion how the conscience of a *sinner* should be addressed with propriety, he says, “ ‘ The *order* of things rather requires, that we
“ should endeavour to convict him of his unholi-
“ ness and of his evil nature, before we exhort him
“ to the contrary; and then, when we do exhort
“ him to perfect holiness, it should be by di-
“ recting him to those *means* which tend towards
“ perfection.” Nay, our author has said, “ ‘ If
“ instead of using exhortations to sinners, *merely*
“ that we may USE THE MEANS which God has
“ appointed, we give them to suppose, that any
“ work that is truly good, is, in whole or in
“ part, to be effected by, or ascribed to, them-
“ selves, then do we dishonour the Spirit of God!”
—Here, it is evident, MINISTERS are *merely* to
use appointed means, with *prudence* and *caution*:
For, they are never to give their HEARERS the
least reason to suppose, that any work which is
truly good, can be, in any part of it, *effected* by
them; this, says our authour, would be to *dis-*
honour

honour the Spirit of God! But, what *means* has Mr. Fuller recommended, or even discovered, by which the unregenerate, (if they do but make a proper use of them, to the full extent of their natural ability) may possess spiritual dispositions, and perform spiritual acts, and spiritual worship? Yet, he continually contends, that whatever a person *has*, *is*, or *does*, when regenerated, it is *no more* than what he ought to *have*, *be*, and *do*, prior to that period, as well as at the time! Either such words must be destitute of meaning, or what our authour has said on the *use of the means*, and of our not being *efficient* causes in any thing which is truly good, must sink into such unmeaning syllables as cannot possibly yield us instruction or the shadow of satisfaction.

IV. DETERRING *his reader from making a proper use of those means in which God has appointed believers to have communion with himself.*

Of our authour's imaginary obligations, it may be truly said, there is not any *mean* by which they can be performed. The simplest reader, therefore, will always perplex him, if he should seriously ask, *How* am I to *be* and *do* what you say I *ought* to be, and *should* accomplish, *prior* to regeneration? But where obligation is real, there is *some mean* to perform it, whether we are *sinners*, or whether we are *saints*. It must be the duty of each, for instance,

instance, to occupy that reason, or grace, which the Lord has bestowed ; but to suppose it is the duty of either to *create*, or to think they *ought* to be *efficient* causes of any thing which is truly good, approaches by much too near that error which the apostle James has not only guarded us against, but plainly contradicted. His words are “ Do not err, “ my beloved brethren, every good gift, and every “ perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down “ from the father of lights, with whom there is “ no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Searching the scriptures, and *prayer*, according to the ability, and degree of persuasion, which God has imparted, seem to be those important and indispensable duties, which lead to every thing that is excellent in religion. Now, whatever be the *cause* of our inability and unbelief, and whatever may be the train of tremendous *consequences* attending each, yet, can it be the duty of any *creature* to *do* that which Omnipotence alone can effect? or even to *pray* for that, which he does not believe it is consistent with the goodness and glory of God to bestow?—That he who *prays*, or *speaks*, should do each according to his faith, (intreating the Lord to increase it;) that he who acts religiously, should act with *humility*, and, in every action, consider *in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being*, may be safely admitted. But, were this properly acknowledged, and the genuine consequences

quences of such a confession embraced, many contentions would for ever cease.

Searching the scriptures is not only recommended by the ^ginspired writers, but, by our ^hLord himself.—If *the Gospel be worthy of all Acceptation*, he must not only know it, but he best of all knows what may be inferred from that fact.—If what you preach be GOSPEL, then, says a sensible man, *it is good tidings*; and, if it be WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, then he infers, it will invite and bear the closest inspection.—So our Lord thought when he said, “*Search the scriptures; in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.*” So the apostle thought when he wrote thus to Timothy, “ⁱ*Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things!*” Nor could he think otherwise when he commended those Bereans who ^k*received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, to know whether these things were so: therefore many of them believed.*—Such wisdom and goodness, such patience and prudence, are worthy our constant imitation. But has our authour indulged this amiable disposition? He does not, indeed, prohibit searching the scriptures; far from it, he attempts to explain them, and wishes all men to read and regard the word of God; yet, at the same time, he most unhappily, in some measure

^g 1 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

ⁱ 2 Tim ii. 7.

^h John v. 39.

^k Acts xvii. 11, 12.

sure, defeats his own design; for he terrifies the timid, and offends the more discerning, by insisting on such obligations as are impossible to be performed, with such penalty for the non-performance, as is very unfriendly to a deliberate and composed attention to the inspired writings, and, unlikely to promote that kind of conviction which issues in sound conversion.—The scriptures make a large book; and contain some things hard to be understood; if therefore, an unregenerate reader be not endued with power from on high; if some time be not allowed him, and consternation be removed, or kept at a distance, what will he understand of the word of truth and grace? A constrained assent may be extorted from him, but that belief which becometh the gospel, and that conduct which best adorns the doctrines of God our Saviour, are not so likely to be produced.—Coercion and perturbation ill agree with glad tidings. They who neglect them, indeed, cannot escape what is due to the criminal cause of their neglect; but inquisitive minds, whatever may be their present weakness, or may have been their former folly, a minister of Christ should address, as the angel saluted those women who watched the sepulchre of our Lord; when he said, *Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified!*

Searching the scriptures, however, will never be a substitute for *supplication*. It is the junction of these

these duties that adds excellence to each. The primitive christians continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.—Our authour is undoubtedly addicted to prayer, and recommends it to his hearers, as much by his own example, as by his exhortations. It is, however, regretted, that his exhortations on this subject are unhappily *obscured*. He says “¹ It is every man’s duty to think of himself as he really is, and as God has said he is”. But suppose *every* man cannot see himself to be what he really is; or that *any* man should not only be ignorant of his real character, but at present, unable to admit that the bible is the word of God: however, such a character may be made up of criminal tempers, and those tempers may stand connected with awful consequences, yet supposing the fact, which is but too common, is it the duty of such a man in his devotions, (should some panic produce a prayer,) to imitate the Syrians in that manner which our authour has ^m directed? He thinks it is: but if it be, it is either the duty of this man to convert himself, or while unconverted, to be as sincere, and spiritual, in his devotion as if he were converted;—and if so, why not his duty to be as spiritual as the most established christian in Great Britain?—Our authour’s sentiments compel him, if he chooses to retain them, to confess this consequence is not pushed too far.

But

¹ P. 47.

^m P. 47.

But, on this subject, let us hear his own argument.—“ⁿ It is to no no purpose to say here, “ *This is the effect of regeneration.* It is granted, “ and what then? Such is the error of men’s “ minds, and enmity of their hearts, that they “ must undergo an entire renovation of soul before “ they can be set right. They must be born again, “ and as it were, new made. But this does not “ disprove, but imply, their obligation to be “ right, *previous* to such renovation.”—*Obligation to be right, previous to such renovation,* must signify, if our authour meant to convey any meaning, that we are obliged to *be right* by some *power of our own*; and if so, it must be by a power which is able to surmount the *errour* of our minds, and the *enmity* of our hearts: but, to *undergo* an entire renovation of soul, to be *born again*, to be *new made*, (unless the interjected *as it were*, alters the very nature of these acts) these words evidently refer to a *power* which is *not our own*; to operations, which would not be *virtuous*, but *vicious*—which would not argue *humility* but *pride*, to wish that we might perform them: because they are operations which, both in *power* and *glory*, are peculiar to the HOLY GHOST. All this is sufficiently perplexing; yet what Mr. Fuller may mean by our obligation to *be right, previous* to regeneration, adds to the obscurity of this perplexing page.

V. *Attempting*

V. *Attempting to distinguish between spiritual
BLESSINGS and spiritual DISPOSITIONS.*

Of this attempt, it may be truly said, either our authour should have let it alone, or have pursued it further. As he has left it, who is not embarrassed by his assertions?—They *only* who take them for granted.—He supposes, that his *last* proposition, which makes it the duty of men in general, to have spiritual dispositions, “*lies at the bottom of the controversy;*” and adds, “*it is hoped that what has been said will make it manifest, that spiritual dispositions are the duty of all mankind.*” What can Mr. Fuller mean less than this, that it is the duty of every unregenerate man to be spiritual without revelation, and prior to regeneration? *Without revelation;* for, have *all mankind* the bible? *Without regeneration;* for duty is something to be done *by us*, and not that which is done by another.—When this difficulty, or some other, is presented, our authour attempts to distinguish between *blessing and disposition*. Thus we have it; “*Faith,* and every other spiritual blessing, considered as *blessings*, do not come under the notion of *duties;* but faith, and every other spiritual disposition, considered as *dispositions* do; and it is men sin they have them not.—In the former sense, *duty* has no concern, unless it be to *desire* and *intreat* a share
“ in

“ in them ; in the latter it has.” Yet, it is but in the following page, that our authour assures us, “^a Whatever a person *is*, or *does*, in respect to “ spiritual dispositions and exercises, when he is “ regenerated, we think it is *no more* than what “ he ought to have *been* and *done*, PRIOR to that “ period, as well as at the time.”—A little lower down, having done his utmost *to make this matter still more plain and evident*, he says, “^r All we affirm is, that it is their duty,”—(the duty of unregenerate men)—“ *to be* THAT which “ nothing but special grace can make them ; and “ he that will deny this, must deny that a bad “ man ought to be a good one.”

One might almost be confident that whoever *denied this*, our authour would not. Yet certainly, he *half* denies it at least ; and perhaps, he will be compelled to give up the other half *also*. He says “ faith, and every other spiritual blessing, considered *as blessings*, do not come under the notion “ of duties.” Now, if *blessing* be as essential to make a *bad* man a *good* one, as *duty*, that, we see, is given up ; for a *bad* man, according to Mr. Fuller, is not bound to *be* a good one, only with respect to his *disposition* ; which he says ought to be spiritual, and that it is his sin it is not so. But it may be asked, since both blessing and duty are supposed to be essential to make a *bad* man a *good* one—which of the two is to take the

the *lead*, the *blessing* or the *disposition*? Is the first to produce the second, or is the second to procure the first? If our authour admits blessing to precede duty, and Christ to be first in his own kingdom, he will be the very man whom he censures; nor need he tremble at the thought. If he denies it, and will affirm that the duty which ought to be performed by the unregenerate, should both precede and obtain spiritual blessings, this would be to assert what even *Arminians* would disapprove. For, they do not suppose that any good disposition of ours will either procure, or precede, what they are pleased to call * preventing grace. Till it be settled, therefore, which is to take the *lead*, the *blessing* or the duty, in what *order*, and to what *end*, the attempt of our authour to distinguish between spiritual blessings and spiritual dispositions, must be classed with one of those unfinished essays which immaturely come to light without beauty to attract, or strength to command minute attention.

Our Lord spake a parable to this end, that *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*. But, does not he who prays with propriety, seek to possess something which he believes to be good; good for him, being what he is; which he is willing to receive as a real favour; which he cannot otherwise expect; which if granted, he hopes to be grateful, and which if denied him, he cannot pretend to complain of the denial as

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an act of injustice? Prayer, then, is becoming, or unbecoming, as these things are perceived, believed and regarded; or, as they are not perceived, and as he who prays either disbelieves, or disregards this connection. Human perceptions, and every thing which is built upon them, are liable to fluctuation; but in all our prayers, unless we verge to hypocrisy, we must rigidly regard reality. In short, when we pray, we must pray as in truth we can, let our frame, or state, or the consequence of so doing, be what it may.

—These petitions of David are excellent; *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: for I wait on thee!*

Suppose the son of a deist, brought up in contempt of revealed religion, to be convinced that the gospel is worthy of all acceptance, but staggers at those very promises which he wishes, above all things, now to enjoy; may he not, in such a situation, pray for instruction and assistance? But can he command, can he deserve these blessings? If they are withheld, is he obliged to be as happy and holy without them, as if those blessings were instantly granted and fully enjoyed? So our authour seems to suppose. But is this *gospel*? Do we perceive in this *the reign of grace*?—Should it be said, that such prayers are always *immediately* successful: are we bound to believe that unsupported saying?—It cannot be denied, that *waiting on God*, (however that

that phrase may be abused by some, and burlesqued by others,) is frequently and strongly recommended in his word. In the most painful and perplexing situations, men have waited, and sometimes waited long, for his salvation. On this subject, a well known promise is, *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: but while so employed, (the soul waiting for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning,) is it the duty of him who thus waits, previous to the desired, but delayed renewal, to mount up with wings, like eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint?*

What is more sovereign, free and gracious, than the operations of the Holy Ghost? Does he not quicken, separate, illuminate, console and sanctify, strengthen and settle, whom he will? Can any man fortel *when* he will operate, on *whom*, in what *manner*, or in what *degree*? Who hath known his mind, that he may instruct him? Have there not been diversities of *gifts*, administrations, and operations, by the same Spirit? Would it not have been rash to have said, when they were most diversified, that it was the duty of any man to have possessed any gift, or operation of the Holy Ghost, previous to the grant of such favour?—Simon Magus admired some of those operations. *He saw and believed, and was baptized. He continued with Phillip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and the signs that were done.*

B 2

He

Rom. viii. 15.

" 1 Cor. xii.

He wished to do the same. But, with all his errors, he saw the Holy Ghost was GIVEN; and, though he offered money, saying *Give me also this power*; evil as this temper was, it shews, that a man *in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*, may believe there is a *power* which he has not; and may greatly *desire* to possess it, without believing that the possession of such power was previously his *duty*. If a man of his complexion could be anxious to obtain his desire without the idea of duty, may not others? Nay, are not all men anxious to possess what they *covet to enjoy*? This fact, refutes most of the alarming inferences of our authour. For our *desires*, in proportion to their strength, whether they are good, or evil, will make us earnest to *have, to be, and do*, whatsoever is pleasing to us. So that, if any man *desire to follow CHRIST*, though he may be persuaded that every christian is what he is, by the *grace* of God, and firmly believe, it is not his duty to make himself a christian, yet while he *wishes to worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*, he will use such *endeavours* as correspond with the real *nature and genuine state* of his own desires; and this, in due time, will make it manifest, whether it be undefiled christianity, or, some corrupt view of it only which has engaged his attention.—If the desires of men be vicious, let us endeavour to convince them of it, and attempt to raise the reverse; but let us always remember

remember, man will never act *without desire*, nor *beyond it*. If the object of his desire be the discharge of *duty*, it may be *strong*; but if it be the enjoyment of what is thought a real *blessing*, it will in common, be *stronger still*; and, which is best of all, as this blessing comes, like health, it will make the whole compass of his *duty* the more *delightful*.

Can any imagine, when Sampson lost his strength and eye sight, his liberty and former dignity, (bound with fetters of brass, and grinding in the prison,) that it was then his duty to have renewed his might, and to have surmounted such affliction? Or, that when he was brought out of his inglorious confinement to be the jest and insult of the inhabitants of Gaza, it was then his duty to pull down the huge house in which he was exposed on the worshippers of Dagon? Or, that when he felt the pillars on which it rested, it was then his duty to make them bend and break, previous to his fervent prayer to the Lord God for adequate ability? Or, that when he had so prayed, and bowed himself with all his might, in order to know whether the ALMIGHTY had answered his petition, if he had not felt in that act, divine energy, would it still have been his duty to have done what he did; and to have *slain*, unassisted, *more at his death than he slew in his life*?

It may be objected, that the strength which Sampson had, and lost, and afterwards regained,

was natural ability. But was he not a Nazarite to God, from the womb to the day of his death? Was he not miraculously strong, and endued with power from on high, to be a judge in Israel? Did he not lose his great strength by his great folly; and against his inclination? Was it not renewed by prayer, in order to avenge the publick insult of his publick character; and the horrid boast of infidels, and of idolatrous and immoral pagans, against the God of Sampson?—*Out of WEAKNESS he was MADE strong.* The strength of his mind returned first: as it advanced, he confessed his weakness and folly, and prayed to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and, in so doing, did he not act a wiser, and a better part, than when he said, *I will go out as at other times before and shake myself*? This must be admitted; for then, he wist not that the Lord was departed from him!

Should it be said, that such remarks might have been spared; this will only shew what is plain enough already, that they who are of our authour's sentiments, and they who are not, cannot be of the same opinion.

VI. *What is said of EQUAL obligation.*

A body consisting of many members, the form, the situation, and office of which are very different, may stand in need of clothing; but can it
be

be necessary so to veil the whole as almost to make it doubtful whether it consists of *one* member only, or of *many*? The mystical body, or church of Jesus Christ, is as diversified in its members, in form, situation, and office, as the human body. This diversity with unity, is its beauty: but this beauty is sometimes so *obscured* by our authour, that one would imagine he has it at heart to promote a bill of *uniformity*, and to compel all men to *believe* and *act alike*.—He says,
 “ “Every man is bound cordially to receive, and
 “ heartily to approve, *whatever* God reveals.”
 Not only to *believe* “ “ that there was such a per-
 “ son as Jesus Christ; that he was born at
 “ Bethlehem; lived and wrought miracles in
 “ Judea; was crucified, buried, and raised again
 “ from the dead; that he ascended into glory,
 “ and will judge the world at the last day; that
 “ he is God and man, and bears the titles of king,
 “ priest, and prophet of his church; that there is
 “ an eternal election, a particular redemption, an
 “ effectual vocation, a final preservance,” &c. &c.
 but *so* to believe, as to *include* in their belief of
 “ the forementioned doctrines, their *qualities*, or
 “ *properties*,” which are said to make “ a great, and
 “ even an essential part of their truth.”—Thus
 the duty of *believing* seems to be pretty equally
 extended by our authour; nor are his *practical*
 obligations sometimes, at a greater distance from
 equality.

B 4

" P. xiv.

" P. 13.

equality. For he says, “¹ Men ought to be *holy*;
 “ ought to *love* God with all their hearts; that
 “² *spiritual* actions are incumbent on all men;
 “ that they ought to have a *principle* or ³ *disposition*
 “ so to act;” in short, that the “⁴ *most pure*
 “ and perfect love is incumbent on all mankind.”

Such is our authour's equalizing plan; which he binds on men who, in his own opinion, (or what is *sometimes* his opinion,) are *totally* unable to regard it; but he subjects them to the “most awful punishments for non-performance, because he contends, they might do all that he requires if they^d would.—Whether what is now produced and referred to, be compared with the apparent contradictions which will be exhibited in the following section, or whether it be considered as it now stands before us, it is sufficiently *obscure*.

What can our authour mean by his *second* proposition, or by much the same assertions in the title of his TREATISE? Is this the meaning; that every man is obliged fully to credit, and cordially to approve, *whatever* it pleases God, at any time, to convince him is both true and good? This would be like saying, it is our duty to *know* what we *understand*, to *credit* what we *believe*, and to *approve* what we *esteem*. These are identical propositions, which communicate no instruction. One might as well say, *That if a thing be, it is*. Such propositions

¹ P. 152.

² P. xiv.

³ P. 152.

^b P. 108.

^c Prop. V.

^d DEF. p. 46.

propositions, as an ^e archbishop has expressed it, are *surfeited with truth*; but Mr. Fuller's fondness for such propositions, has been ^f already censured.—Fond as our authour may be of such modes of speech, it cannot be supposed he would indulge them in the *title* of his TREATISE, and in one of his *leading* propositions. He must, therefore, be understood to mean, that *every man is bound cordially to receive, and heartily to approve whatever God reveals*, in the literal sense of that assertion. But if we so understand him, we shall not only do that which he ^g *forbids* us, but be in possession of an idea which to St. Paul himself, was probably unknown.—To the church at Philippi, thus he wrote: *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*—Yet when this great man came the nearest to *that* mark which, when converted, he continually kept in view, did he either *believe*, or had he *done*, more than our authour says that every man ought to *believe* and *do*, PREVIOUS to his conversion?

Will Mr. Fuller seriously contend, that every man ought, not only to exercise his own talents,

B 5

whatever

^e Archbishop Tillotson.

^f LETT. p. 82.

^g DEF. p. 23, 24.

whatever they may be, with prayer for wisdom and for a blessing, but that every man *ought* to perceive as much as St. Paul perceived, or to be as holy as he was, not having his spiritual perception? Was it even the duty of Paul to be as near the mark at his *first* setting out, as when he had *finished* his course? It might as well be said, it was his duty to have set out before he did: and, it is more than probable that our authour is of that opinion. But he who takes this liberty, may as well assert, it was the duty of Saul to have apprehended that, *for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus*, BEFORE he was apprehended of him. Or, as well affirm, that it was the duty of Saul, when arrested, in his way to Damascus,—instead of his saying *Who art thou Lord?* to have beheld the glory of Jesus Christ, as the glory of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth;—instead of his saying, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* to have found it out;—instead of his going into the city to be told what he must do for the Lord, after he was filled with the Holy Ghost, to have illuminated himself, or to have been baptized, (as afterwards became a very common practice,) without the least pretence to illumination!—Should our authour reply, “He that will deny this, must deny that a bad man ought to be a good one:” we not only wish him to recollect what answer has been given to that inference already, but

but we add, he who asserts it, may also assert, (and perhaps Mr. Fuller has no objection,) that it was the duty of Saul to have been a gracious man, BEFORE it pleased God, who separated him from his mother's womb, *to call him by his grace.*—To be good without grace, is the favourite opinion of the world; that the *unregenerate* ought to be so, and that they *could*, if they *would*, is, at present, the favourite opinion of our authour, and of his select friends.

When Saul was converted the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love. The effect of this favour was his unremitting ardour to *press forward towards the mark for the prize.* But, thus animated, and thus acting, what temper towards others did such abundant grace produce? The best. *Let us therefore, (said he to the Philippians) as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already ATTAINED, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*—Here are light, wisdom, gentleness, goodness, with a proper concern for a conversation becoming the gospel, or, for behaviour that might adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. May we unweariedly follow this great teacher, and copy, as we can, his admirable example!—In his epistle to other^d churches, we perceive the same judgement,

B 6

^d Rom. xv. i. Gal. vi. i.

ment, and the same disposition. His compassion of the feeble minded never fails. But were we to suppose that it is the *duty* of the weakest christian to be as strong as the strongest, or that he who has but *two* degrees of perception and power, ought to have *ten*, or having but *two* of each, it is nevertheless his *duty* to perceive and perform as much as if he actually had *ten*, would this strange opinion either manifest our *humility* or enlarge our *benevolence* to the feeble minded?

Some people have imbibed from the earliest dawn of reason, such an aversion to every equalizing plan in the church or state, *strictly* understood, that the shadow of such a disposition is apt to awaken their settled disapprobation. Dislike to that all-confounding system, has frequently been confirmed by the fine and full resemblance which the apostle has shown between the natural body of man, and that sacred and numerous society of believers which is united by mutual sympathy and consent, and who, in their *corporate* capacity, are called *the church of Christ*. There is also, in certain respects, the same analogy between the *natural* body of man and the *civil* corporations of mankind. Who can read the twelfth chapter of the first of Corinthians and not be of this opinion? But, if this analogy be just, what a *vail* has our authour thrown over the mystical body of Jesus Christ! How are the different members of that body and their distinct duties *obscured*! What pressing

sing and urging, on legal principles, does our authour indulge, to show that unregenerate sinners ought to be members of this spiritual society, *previous* to the renovating influence of that spirit which forms and animates the whole! What eagerness, in *common*, does he discover to promote the *equal* belief and *practice* of every christian; (as well as to show it is the duty of every man to be a christian) as if all members of the church of Christ had the *same* office; or, as if where *more* was given, nothing *more* was required!

Two things may be objected to these remarks. *First*, that the sovereign distribution of miraculous gifts should be distinguished from that grace which bringeth salvation.—That they ought to be distinguished is admitted: but that the grace which is essential to salvation, is both as *supernatural* and as *sovereign* as any gift that ever God bestowed on man, and that what is commonly called spiritual gifts, were always of real advantage to the possessor, unless when *abused*, cannot fairly be denied. *Secondly*, it may be said, what the law required of Adam in Eden that the life of innocence might be continued; and what is *now* required of a *sinful* creature, that CHRIST, *who is our life*, may be enjoyed, should not be confounded. This also is admitted: but such an objection would ill become our authour, because he has not been careful himself to keep up any such distinction. Nay, he denies it; for he says,

it

it appears to him, that the scripture knows but of one kind of *real* holiness, and that is a conformity to the holy law of God; so that the law of *innocence*, and the will of God to *us*, are supposed to be the same.

The reader is now in possession of what are thought to be the principal sources of *obscurity* in Mr. Fuller's TREATISE. Obscurity, which does not arise from mere *brevity*, nor from *prolixity*, nor from bad *arrangement* of expression, but from something which is not so easy to be defended. But, some no doubt have read it, who have overlooked the present subjects of complaint. Of such perhaps, it may likewise be said, they have read his TREATISE without perceiving any *errata*, or finding the want of that which our authour has been so good as to ^{*}give. Want of perception, in some cases, may be our advantage; but it cannot be admitted, that what is not *perceived* does not *exist*.—It is acknowledged, that our authour sometimes, speaks with greater caution than has hitherto been represented: but it does not appear he ever designs in any page to revoke his leading sentiments. Whatever, therefore, may *seem* to oppose them, must be considered as so many contradictions to his main intention. Such contradictions increase the perplexity of the *careful* reader; but, they are so *numerous* and so *singular*, that it has been thought proper to reserve them for the following *section*.

SECT.

ⁱ P. 81.

^{*} P. xvi.

S E C T. II.

Mr. FULLER'S *leading propositions considered as*
INCONSISTENT.

TO a ^afriend who has, it seems, invited our
author to stricter ties of friendship, Mr.
Fuller replies, “^b Could I see evidence on his
“ side, I hope, I should embrace his *invitation*.
“ But it is a presumptive argument with me,
“ that his views of things must be, some how or
“ other, *very distant* from the truth, or they could
“ not abound with such manifest *inconsistencies*.”—
Whether our author will admire, or even admit
this argument, as it is here retorted, or will be of
opinion that this section exhibits *manifest inconsis-*
tencies of his own production, it might be thought
presumptuous to foretel.—Let it, however, be
remembered, that the present charge of Mr. Ful-
ler's being inconsistent, is entirely confined to
those apparent contradictions and mistakes which
are *here* produced. It would be very unfair
to

^a Mr. Dan Taylor.

^b DEF. p. 10 6.

to search for any of a *prior* date. The *last* pamphlet is always supposed to contain the *present* judgement of him who wrote it. In this respect, it is like a man's last *will*, which should ever be so interpreted as if he had never made any other.—The apparent contradictions of our authour, are here reduced to *seven* leading articles.

I. On the GROUND of *religious obligation*.

According to our authour's favourite view, this is *mere* injunction. He says, that " an ^cobligation " and encouragement to believe, are two *very* " different things." He adds, " the one, I suppose arises from the moral law, the other from " the gospel." Yet this discovery seems to have been forgotten, when he said " that ^dthere is a " sense in which our obligation to comply with " the gospel does arise from the gospel *itself*, is " allowed." Nor is this the only time when our authour was of that opinion. For, on this subject, he truly says, he has given us his thoughts in his TREATISE. If that page be consulted, to which we are referred, we shall there ^e find his *third* proposition, with a comment upon it; the result of which is, that though the *gospel* be not a *law* in *form*, it is so in *fact*; and, indeed, a *law* of the greatest *extent* and *rigour*. But, should any complain of this contradiction, our authour may plead

^c DEF. p. 56.

^d DEF. p. 53.

^e P. 57.

plead, he has plainly told us, that “ the gospel,
 “ strictly speaking, contains ^f no injunctions at
 “ all, but *merely* the good tidings of salvation by
 “ Jesus Christ; that what ^g constitutes the gospel is
 “ GOOD NEWS; that the gospel is ^h simply GOOD
 “ NEWS; and that *news*, whether *good* or *bad*, re-
 “ lates not to *precepts*, or *injunctions*, but to *tidings*
 “ *proclaimed*.”—If these things are perfectly con-
 sistent, what can constitute contradiction?

II. On the EXTENT of religious obligation.

This is sometimes so stated by our authour, as
 has been already ⁱ observed, that in reading that
 statement, one would imagine it was his full inten-
 tion to prove that all men are bound to believe and
 act alike. Nay, he hopes he has made it manifest,
 “ that *spiritual dispositions*, to the subjects of which
 “ God hath promised salvation, (though none
 “ but saints are or ever will be possessed of them)
 “ are nevertheless, *the duty of all mankind*.”—But, if
 it be the duty of every *bad* man to be a *good* one,
 and of every sinner to be a saint, is not our authour
 who affirms it, obliged to instruct them how they
 may perform their duty?—Many things may be
desirable which no man can effect, and *dreadful*
 which no creature, by his own power, can avoid;
 but that any thing can be the *duty* of any man
 to

^f DEF. p. 62.

^h DEF. p. 57.

^g P. v.

ⁱ See the preceding section.

to perform which ought only to be done by the ALMIGHTY, seems to be an extravagant supposition. Has any creature an arm like God? Should any man therefore, think it his duty to do that, which the arm of the LORD alone *can* effect; nay, which that arm alone *ought* to produce? By no means; for, the *power* and *glory* of those acts which are peculiar to JEHOVAH, cannot be *divided*.—He that wishes *weakness* to accomplish what OMNIPOTENCE only can perform, or to be OMNIPOTENT, may as *wisely* wish to *measure the waters in the hollow of his hand, to mete out heaven with his span, to comprehend the dust of the earth in a measure, to weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance;* and may as *modestly* wish, he could ascend and fill the throne of God!

It is unpleasing to perceive that our authour speaks as loosely of the *scriptures* as on the *power* of God.—“ * *Scripture* did I say? Surely it never
“ ought to have been questioned, even though
“ God had *never* told us, whether loveliness ought
“ to be loved, beauty admired, purity imitated,
“ just authority feared and obeyed, sin lamented,
“ truth embraced, and a vile sinner lie humble
“ before God!

“ O ye cold hearted frozen formalists!

“ On such a theme 'tis impious to be calm;

“ Passion is reason, transport temper here!”

Thus

Thus our authour warmed himself, till, (by Dr. Young's assistance,) he kindled into flame. But let us be sober. Was it ever intended that Adam, after his apostacy, or that any of his natural descendants, should be able to perceive, and judge, and act, as our authour has supposed they might, without revelation? Why, then, was Adam so soon after his fall, compelled to hear the voice of God? Why, as revelation was enlarged, was redemption, both by price and power, more and more unfolded? Why did ¹David so much exult in this distinguishing blessing, and why do we so repeatedly thank God that he who is our peace, hath broken down the middle wall of partition, if after all, even now the canon of scripture is *completed*, it should be thought not *essential* to produce the *purest* love to God?—How different were the views and decision of *our* apostle! ^m He informs us, that *Gentiles* were *far off*, and remained so, till they were *made nigh by the blood of Christ*; that while they were *without Christ*, they were *aliens from the common wealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenant of promise*; *having no hope, and being without God in the world*.—What a *contrast* between the writer of this Epistle to the *Ephesians*, and what has been quoted from that TREATISE which many are said to admire!

O ye warm hearted unthinking zealots!
On such a theme, 'tis disloyal to be still;
Rebuke is reason, anger temper here!

From

¹ Psalms 146, 19, 20.

^m Ephes. ii.

From what has been produced it seems as if our authour thought our obligations to believe, and to behave, were the *same*: yet who that reads his following remarks, can suppose that Mr. Fuller is of that opinion? He says, " Our love to God " consists either in *gratitude* for the bestowment of " his favours, or *complacency* in him, for his own " native excellency." He adds, " ^a the *first* of these " is the duty of every one who is a sharer of those " favours, and that, according to the nature and " degree of what he shares. The *last*, which is " perhaps, the purest, noblest kind of love that " can be exercised, is incumbent on every one " who has the *natural* use of his faculties, and the " means of knowing those excellencies; which " every intelligent creature has, in a greater, or " lesser degree. Those who have access to the " holy scriptures" [which supposes that some of the *purest* and *noblest* lovers of God have not!] " have the means of plentifully knowing what " God is, and nothing but a shameful disinclination and wicked aversion hides his glory from " their minds. As to those who have *never* heard of " the scriptures, they have the works of creation " and providence, by which they *might* learn, if " they were *rightly disposed*, so much of the divine " character, as to know him to be a most amiable, " lovely being."

Here, our religious obligations seem to be as *different* as in some preceding quotations they appeared

peared to be *alike*. Now, in one view, they are said to be according to the favours we have received; and, in another, to be according to our *perception* of the divine character, and the *medium* by which that perception is obtained. If our authour had not depreciating views of *gratitude*, would he not admit, that the purest, noblest kind of love, was always according to the *nature* and *degree* of that favour which we receive? For, the medium by which we perceive divine excellence, and the power we have to enjoy it, must be favours which such criminals as we are have no right to expect. But our authour conceiving that the works of *creation* and *providence* are a sufficient medium, and that our *natural* faculties, *rightly disposed*, are a sufficient power to produce the purest, *noblest* love to God, superiour favours, such as redemption and renovation, (though mentioned in stronger terms, and as laying us under much greater obligations,) instead of producing superiour affection to God, are supposed not to produce any such esteem of his excellence as equals the more disinterested love which Mr. Fuller has extravagantly extolled.

To some people these things are unpleasing. —But peradventure it was an oversight. No; for our authour recollects and repeats the substance of this *page with apparent satisfaction. He says, “Our obligations to God, as has been hinted
“ before

“ before, appear to rise from *two* grand springs;
 “ the one is, what God *DOETH* for us; or the nu-
 “ merous bounties of his hand; the other is, what
 “ God is in himself, or the infinite excellence of
 “ his nature. The *first* is binding on all those,
 “ and *only* those, on whom his gifts are bestowed;
 “ and that in *proportion* to the value and circum-
 “ stances of those gifts. *Carnal* men are under
 “ obligations to love God for his innumerable
 “ bounties to them, as the God of nature and
 “ providence; and the circumstance of these
 “ bounties, being given them amidst their rebel-
 “ lion against him, ought to heighten their love.
 “ *Good* men are under exceeding higher obliga-
 “ tions for his peculiar gifts to them, as the God
 “ of all grace. *Carnal* men are not bound to love
 “ God for his special and distinguishing love to
 “ them, seeing there is no *evidence* of his having
 “ any such love towards them; but *godly* men
 “ are.”

How different and various, according to this
 view of things, are our religious obligations!
 Who would imagine, when he compares this
 with some preceding quotations, it was the pro-
 duction of the same authour in the same TREATISE!
 But, if all obligation “^a must arise from some
 “ law,” from the ‘*injunction*’ of some law, not from
inducement; and if that law be, as our authour
 says it is, the *moral law*, it may be asked, are the
 injunctions

^a DEF. p. 57.

^r DEF. p. 56, 57.

injunctions of the moral law not only *exceedingly various*, but in this vast variety, are those injunctions to be obeyed without any *inducement*? — *Further*; if *good* men are under *exceeding* higher obligations to love God for his *peculiar gifts* unto them, as the God of all grace, than *carnal* men are, seeing carnal men have no *evidence* of such *favour*, which, indeed, is a fact; what becomes of our authour's fancy, so frequently introduced, namely, that the purest, noblest kind of love which can be exercised, is not that delight which is closely connected with *gratitude*, but that which consists in rapturous admiration of the native *excellence* of God, and which does not need so much as the *report* of his distinguishing favour to give it existence? — *Lastly*; if *carnal* men are not bound to love God without *evidence*, can they be bound to *produce* it? But how often does our authour insist, with sufficient severity, that it is incumbent on every man, *previous* to his renovation, to be THAT, which the moment any man is, he would either immediately have an *evidence* of God's distinguishing favour towards him, or, he would be both holy and happy without it?

Our authour may object, that he never supposes *any* man ever will do what he has required. It is true he does not; but he always supposes *every* man *could* do this if he *would*, and therefore asserts that he *ought* to do it. If this be a fact, every objection is already removed from the unconverted,

except

except their want of *inclination*; but is this probable, when it is so evident, that either in Mr. Fuller, or in his opposers, there is so much want of understanding?—It is affecting, that our authour has so frequently forgotten his own observation. He set out with saying, that “to enjoin what God has not enjoined, is to act without warrant, and would be cruelty to our own species, as it subjects them to the charge of abundance of guilt, of which, God knows, they have enough in the breach of what he has enjoined!”—This observation, had it been properly regarded, would have done Mr. Fuller great honour; but alas! how seldom do we meet with that uncouth yet hacknied term *incumbent*, either in his TREATISE or DEFENCE, where this just observation is not contradicted.

III. On faith.

Faith being a capital article in our authour's TREATISE, he has not been wanting of words to explain it. He has told us what it is not, and what it is; what it includes and excludes; he has condescended to describe, define, explain, exemplify and simplify the nature and duty of believing, in a very singular manner; so that, if on this subject we should meet with any contradiction, where may we expect to find Mr. Fuller perfectly consistent?—Some perhaps would rather argue thus;

thus ; if a man be not entangled in over doing on any subject, where shall such a man be found inconsistent ? There is some reason to fear that this remark is, in part, too applicable to our authour's *over doing* on the present article.

What is faith ? According to Mr. Fuller, “ ‘ It is not believing our own personal interest in “ the blessings of the gospel ;” THAT, our authour apprehends, “ is a *low* and *mean* idea of faith.”— But suppose, some should assert the contrary, and say, that faith “ consists in knowing that our “ Redeemer liveth ; crying Abba, Father ! laying “ hold on eternal life, and claiming interest in a “ crown of righteousness ?” Why, then, our authour is civil enough to say, “ Be it so :” and, he gravely adds, “ What is all this, but believing “ the truth ?”—Suppose, Mr. Fuller is not pressed with such objections, what does he freely say of faith ?—“ ‘ It is *crediting* some testimony where “ intuitive evidence cannot be expected. It is “ *belief* of the truth. It is to *view* things as God “ views them, or *as they are*. It is a cordial *reception* of the truth, as it is in Jesus ; or a *believing* “ with all the heart. But, to believe only the “ *shadow* of truth, without entering into the *spirit* “ of it, is little *more* than to believe *nothing at all* “ about it. It is therefore, to *believe* the *qualities*, “ or *properties* of truth, which make a great, and “ even an essential part of truth. It is to *receive* a

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“ doctrine

¹ P. 5, 6, 18, 19.

² P. 10, 12, 14, 18.

“ doctrine as it is.” In short, “ it is *knowing, crying, laying hold, claiming, believing, crediting, viewing, receiving, discerning, seeing and embracing.*” Faith is all this; for, as our authour asks, “ what is all this, but BELIEVING THE TRUTH?”—This is the *all-containing* description, which not only includes the preceding terms, but many more; such as, “ *ⁱ drawing aside the veil, viewing things*”—(not *exactly* as they are, but—) “ *in some measure* as they are; or, in other words,” (and who will say that *words* are wanting) “ faith “ is a sweet, solid *persuasion* of the mind; a *setting* “ *to* our seal that God is true.”

Such, with a few connecting words, is an abridgment of what our authour has said on faith, in the former part of his treatise; and, one would imagine that all parties must be satisfied with the detail. For what a strange believer must he be, who cannot select his *own* persuasion from such copious materials! *Sandemanians*, and the followers of another *northern light*, on * theological sentiments, may each of them meet with something they would be equally unwilling to throw away. But, that the capital definition of our authour, BELIEF OF THE TRUTH, may be fully understood, he has introduced a particular note, and thus improved it. “ *ⁱ Truth, in its full latitude, has, I*

“ think
ⁱ P. 18.

* A Mr. Barclay; who is as much for the assurance of faith, as Mr. Sandeman was against it.

ⁱ P. 20.

" think, with great propriety, been considered in
 " three points of view; namely, in existence, con-
 " ception and expression. It is with the first two
 " of these we are concerned. Now, truth in ex-
 " istence, is reality; and if so, to believe the truth,
 " which is here called truth in conception, is to
 " realize it, or to consider it as real, that is, to
 " consider it as it is." This is taking some pains,
 it must be confessed, to make the matter plain.
 Yet, to all this, explanations are added; after
 which, the old inference, that let faith be what it
 may, it is every man's duty to have it, is thus in-
 ferred: " ² The question, then, will only stand
 " thus, Is it the duty of every man who hears the
 " solemn realities of religion, to consider them as
 " real, that is, to consider them as they are, or
 " is it not?"—To this question it may be replied,
 that by every man who *hears* the solemn realities
 of religion, our authour either means *hearing of*
them, or he does not. If he does not mean this,
 it is most probable that something *more* than hear-
 ing of the realities of religion is intended. But, if
perception and *persuasion* be included in *hearing*, our
 authour's question is wanting of *propriety*. On
 the other hand, if the particle *of* be rightly sup-
 plied, is it not the duty of every man who hears
 of the solemn realities of revealed religion, to *con-*
sider what is said; and, if it seems *probable*, or even
 C 2 *possible,*

possible, that what is said is from *above*, to *pray* that the Lord would give him understanding?

What our authour considers as the most *plausible* objection to his leading definition of faith, he has had the courage to ^a mention; and after many words, which might perhaps, been as well omitted, at last he condescends to make this concession:

“^b It is freely acknowledged, however, that it is in this large sense, including not only belief of the truth, but the actual outgoing of the soul towards Jesus Christ, in a way of *dependence* upon him, that faith in him is *generally* to be taken in the *New Testament*.”—This acknow-

ledgement, though just, ill agrees with many things which Mr. Fuller has said on faith. It also implies his want of memory. For, in his preface to his TREATISE, he had settled the matter thus: “^c True faith is nothing *more* nor *less*, than

“ a hearty or cordial belief of what God says.” As if such cordial belief was no great matter, our authour adds, “ surely, it must be every one’s duty

“ where the gospel is published *to do that*.”—This is no slip of his pen. It is wont to be so employed. “^d Whosoever among the rebellious race of men, shall but sincerely and penitently say, *I have sinned*, acknowledge his guilt, and cordially approve and embrace the mediator, shall not

“ perish,

^a P. 22.

^c P. iv.

^b P. 23.

^d P. 157.

“perish, but have everlasting life.” Such intimations of its not being any great difficulty to perform the full extent of our duty, (assuring us that our *cannot*, is nothing else but a *will not*,) from an authour who boasts of his representing the moral law to be *broader* than his neighbours, may seem strange: but Mr. Fuller knew that the *widest* supposed extent of duty seldom offends us, if we apprehend it is *easy* to be performed.

How many senses of faith Mr. Fuller may be in possession of, is not for us to say. He has given us the strict, the slender, the large, and the general sense of that word; and may have other senses in reserve. That the same word may acquire a variety of meanings is not to be disputed; that thus it has been with faith, will not be contradicted; but, when our authour adds, “ * It would “ be no difficult thing, however, to trace all these “ to one source, and to one original idea running “ through the whole,” it may be observed, Mr. Fuller has not yet given us any proof that he is competent to such a task. It is thought, that if he would try to substitute any one word, or phrase, for the word faith, wherever that term occurs in the bible, he would be convinced that this is not so easy a task as he seems to have apprehended.

On the whole, what is any man the *wiser* for all that our authour has said on *faith*? What is any man taught by being told, it is neither ^f *more* nor *less* than *belief of the truth*; but that it generally ^g includes *much more*? By being told, it is not ^h *appropriation*; but that it is ever attended with ⁱ *application* of the truths of the gospel to our own particular cases? By being told, it is fully to credit whatever God reveals; but that this is not to be understood even of ^k all kind of *scripture* truth? By being told, that all obligation to believe is founded on the moral *law*, on ^l *injunction*, not on encouragement, that the *gospel* contains no ^m *injunctions* at all; but that it virtually *requires such obedience to* ⁿ *itself*, as includes saving *faith*? By being told saving *faith*, includes a spiritual understanding of the *glory* of the gospel, and ^o *something more*; and, that this *faith* is the duty of ^p every man where the gospel comes; yet, wherever it *exists* it is the ^q *effect* of divine influence?—If any man can be much the *wiser* for these contradictions, who would not be tempted to envy his uncommon penetration? If this be to inform, who can be unqualified to instruct? If these things are perfectly *consistent*, what can be called *verbal opposition*?

IV.

^f P. iv.^g P. 13, 23. DEF. 24.^h P. 5.ⁱ DEF. P. 25.^k DEF. P. 24.^l DEF. P. 56.^m DEF. P. 62.ⁿ P. 57.^o DEF. p. 24.^p title page of the treat. and prop. II.^q DEF. p. 28.

IV. On human ABILITY.

Of our ability and inability, Mr. Fuller has said many things. Take a specimen of his decisions on our *inability*. “^r The inability of man “ to come to Christ, is doubtless *total*, which we “ never deny. “ The inability of men to *do* “ things spiritually good, is *real* and *total*. “ Must “ not that inability be total, which consists in *total* “ *depravity*? “ Man is *utterly unable* to do any “ *thing* spiritually good. “ It is allowed, that the “ *flesh* will never be prevailed upon to choose, “ adhere unto, and delight in God; nor do we “ ever expect it will. Nay, it might have been “ added, OMNIPOTENCE ITSELF cannot make “ it.” In short, according to Mr. Fuller, such is “ the state of all men, that “ unless the gospel “ could exhibit a condition that should fall in “ with men’s evil propensities, the aversion of “ their hearts would for ever forbid their com- “ pliance.—When we compare ourselves with “ even *heathen* nations, *Are we better than they?* “ *no, in no wise!*”

Such are sometimes our authour’s ideas on human *inability*. Are they exactly the same in the following words? “^x We suppose men’s in-

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“ ability

^r P. 71.^v P. 181.^s P. 146.^w DEF. p. 105.^t DEF. p. 45.^x P. 147.^u P. 154.

" ability lies *wholly* in their criminal disinclina-
 " tions, and vile dispositions. ^y Men want no
 " more *power* to believe, than they want power
 " to do every thing else that is really good, even
 " so much as to think a good thought. ^z Our
 " cannot is *nothing else* but a will not. ^a It is not
 " a natural inability that mankind are under to
 " do the will of God. It is impossible for any one
 " to be under a natural inability to please God.
 " ^b There is no natural inability in man to do
 " the will of God; he has all the members of the
 " body at his command, and all the faculties of
 " the soul. The grand defect is in the *will*.
 " ^c There are certain propensities which constitute
 " a part of our nature as men, and which there-
 " fore, are simply natural"—(these, Mr. Fuller
 says, are not *derived* from Adam's fall, nor are
 they *impure*; should you ask, whence come they,
 and what are they? our authour's answer is,)
 " these, in themselves considered, are a part of
 " human nature in its *purest state*.—^d It seems"
 (continues our authour) " if men had but *power*
 " to comply, all this injustice would subside.
 " Well, we affirm they have *power*."—But suppose
gentlemen, some should think of asking, *who are*
ye? Possibly, such might not think that the pro-
 noun *WE*, though it were printed in capitals, of
 sufficient

^y P. 152, 153.^b P. 184.^z P. 160, 177.^c DEF. p. 32, 33.^a P. 188, 189.^d DEF. p. 46.

sufficient weight in this connection, unless supported by argument. Our authour may reply, and is not proper proof of *our* affirmation at hand? Why, truly, if the following *show* of argument be of any value, sufficient proof is not far to seek; but if it be not, WE AFFIRM, alone supports the affirmation. *First*, our authour and his associates, say, men have power. *Secondly*; this is explained by another assertion, namely, that men have the same *natural* ability to embrace Christ as to reject him. *Thirdly*; now comes the conclusion; they *could* comply with the gospel if they *would*.—Can more *cogent* arguments be expected? Perhaps they cannot; since it is but fair to suppose, that our authour and his abettors have done their best. They must, however, unite their force afresh, and much extend their reputation in the republic of letters, before their *bare* affirmation, on such a subject, will give universal satisfaction.

On the whole; what our authour has said of our *inability* and *ability* is not more *inconsistent* than *convenient*. An old and * worthy minister of Jesus Christ, meeting with opposition from some *Arminian* preachers, one of his members, who seemed half gone, said to him, “ Well, Sir, say what you please, they do lay man *very* low “ indeed!” *Never any lower, Thomas*, (replied his aged pastor) *but that with some little assistance he is*

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supposed

* Mr. William Christian, many years pastor of a Church at Sheephead, in Leicestershire.

supposed to be able to rise up again when ever he chooses. At such representations of ability and inability, men seldom take offence. What should excite their aversion? What should lead them to say, *Why doth he yet find fault?* Our authour and his abettors, well knew that the *Arminians* would consider them as their *friends*; though it is evident they did not wish for such *excess* of friendship as ^f *one* amongst them has manifested; at least they did not wish him to have shown in the *manner* which he has done, such barefaced respect to their united labours. But, exclusive of *his* esteem, who is most acceptable to *Arminians* of different denominations? Who are most caressed and applauded for their *catholic* conduct? Who are most anxious to secure, (and sometimes by methods deservedly censured,) the shadow of popularity? Who are most desirous of being *thought* very useful, and *fond* of being consequential?—When the appeal is to fact, argument against it may discover disgust, but impotent displeasure had better be concealed than exposed to ridicule, or left to rage in vain.

Of *force*, as well as of *grace*, it is difficult to speak with propriety. “Whether force is spiritual or corporeal, whether it remains after action, how it is transferred from one body to another, who can say?” The *origin* and *effects* of both force and grace, may be plain, when the things

^f Mr. Dan Taylor.

things themselves may be misunderstood. Mr. Fuller frequently supposes that *will* and *power* are the same thing. Is he not deceived? In many cases there may be the utmost exertion of the *will* where there is no *power* to do what is willed; and there may be a plenitude of *power* which can do nothing for want of *will*.—To affirm that men have the same natural ability to embrace Christ as to reject him, is artful; but is it argument? Had our authour said, in direct expression, men have ability to embrace Christ, some would have felt themselves alarmed, who now feel themselves perplexed. To say they have the same *natural* ability to embrace him as to reject him, will puzzle many; but whom can it instruct? Does it require *ability* to reject Jesus Christ? Let this be proved. Till proof is produced, (as, in point of fact, no man receives Jesus Christ who is not born from above,) how does Mr. Fuller know that all men have the same natural ability to embrace Jesus Christ as to reject him? For, have all men the same *natural* ability to embrace the same objects with the same respect?

We are not, however, allowed to suppose, that by all our authour has written, he ever meant to magnify man. He is of opinion, “ it does not
 “ at all tend to *cry up* human nature to say men
 “ have a *natural power*, or are possessed of all the
 “ faculties necessary to love God, and keep his

“ *whole law*, if their hearts were but rightly “ *disposed.*” How! a natural power to, keep the **WHOLE** law of God, if *our* hearts were but rightly disposed! Of whom is our authour speaking? Of *criminal* creatures, who have gone astray from the womb; whose first feeble pulse began to beat iniquity and death; who, as they advanced in life, drank iniquity like water. What is the voice of the **LAW** to such a generation of vipers? What it should be, a **CURSE!** *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* The *penalty* belongs to the law; and where deserved, it must be felt for ever; **UNLESS** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse in our stead. If Christ be *formed* in us, it is certain he *died* for us: But if Christ be not received as the end of the law for righteousness, we are yet under it, not *only* as a *rule* of conduct, but as a *covenant* of works; and we must ever remain in that tremendous situation, till it pleases **GOD** to **BEGET** us again to a *lively hope* by the *resurrection* of *Jesus Christ from the dead.*—Is there, it may be asked, no *remedy* but in sovereign, supernatural favour? **NONE.** Are not men, therefore, objects of *pity* **RATHER** than of *blame*? Far from it. For, though they may quarrel with the Almighty for the consequences of transgression, they love to transgress. Though relief is administered with wisdom, they do not shew themselves to be *men* on the report

of this relief, but act in a manner that they *would*, and indeed, *do* REPROBATE on every subject of *allowed* importance except that of *salvation*.

No man should be admitted *so* to distinguish between the law as a *covenant*, and as a *rule* of moral action, *as*, in the remotest manner, to hint that he who has not *received* the atonement is not, of *necessity*, under a covenant of works.—When the law was given to Adam, was he not in a state of *friendship* with his Maker? That covenant which was made with him, was not made with him as a *child*, but as a *man*; not as a man who *grew* up by slow degrees to manhood, but as a man who was *created* in the image of his Maker. On the breach of that covenant of works which was made with Adam, as the *root* and *representative* of his numerous posterity, (and not as a *mere* INDIVIDUAL) *friendship* expired, and that *grace*, which was given the elect in Christ Jesus before the world began, *appeared*. *For what?* To relieve the wretched. *How?* reconciling *such* to God by the atonement, and renewing them in the spirit of their mind, by the Holy Ghost. From what *motive?* Sovereign favour. To whom *extended?* To the elect. To what *END?* To confound the *wise*; to confound the *mighty*; to bring to *nought* things that *are*; that *no* flesh should *glory* in his presence; that, *according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

If

If originally, felicity and friendship were the roots of acceptable obedience to God, is a fallen, cursed, corrupt creature to be taught, that the honour of reconciliation is to come from his wisdom, or to be effected, or to be applied, by his power? or that acceptable obedience to the law of God can precede the payment of his debt? But, must not his heart be either ill-informed, or ill-disposed, who thinks, because *the stipend of sin is death*, therefore, he, himself, *ought* to make satisfaction for his own iniquities? If a sinner who ought to be ever cursed, unless a saviour interposes, ought to *pay* his own debt, it is natural to suppose, if he be, what some would call, an honest debtor, he will *wish* he could pay it, and will *endeavour*, to pay a part. Probably with much *distress*, poor man! that he can pay no more. But what is meant by *paying* our debt? Is it not *so* to *suffer* and *obey*, that from the *value* of *our* sufferings and obedience, some time or other, we should receive a full discharge? *Ought* any TRANSGRESSOR even to *wish* he could *so* suffer and obey? Is not such a wish inimical both to the *government* and *grace* of God? Is it not, in effect, saying we are sorry that *we* cannot do what CHRIST has done? That there should be *such* obedience and sufferings that will magnify the law and make it honourable, or, if there be not, that its *righteous* and *everlasting* CURSE should be executed upon us, is admitted.

That

That such *obedience* and *sufferings* can be found in any object whatsoever but Jesus Christ, is denied. He saw the *extent* and loved the *excellence* of that law which is *holy, just and good*. He became obedient unto death, and, in DYING. He hath once suffered for sins; the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He by himself, purged our sins; and, by one offering, he hath perfected, for ever, them that are sanctified. It became him, in his peculiar character, so to fulfil that divine law which we have broken, and still break, without the least *excuse*, as it became, and yet becomes no other.—He that thinks he ought to do any thing which is peculiar, in power and glory, to Jesus Christ, or to the Divine Spirit, has an unhappy way of thinking. He that would infer, that if this be not his *duty*, his deviations from the moral law, and want of that rectitude which it originally required, are not sinful, may fancy, if he chooses, he has all the faculties of his soul, at his command; but if this be true, those faculties must be very *feeble*, or their commander very *weak*, to form such a *conclusion*.

Let those who have broken the law of God, (and who has not?) consider what is contained in the *whole law*. Let them remember, that though the deserved curse ought not to be removed by any, but by Jesus Christ; yet, unless he removes it, all men *must*, and *will*, for ever endure it. Let them recollect, that redemption and regeneration are
not

not only inseparably connected, but equally of grace. Let them confess, without the latter, Christ is not formed in them, nor received by them; and, that dying in that condition, the curse of the law is inevitable. On the other hand, if Christ be received, that object is received on whom the curse has spent its utmost force, and from whose fulness every *suitable* and every *spiritual* blessing, may be expected. Every deviation, indeed, from the the moral law of God is still transgression. Sin is always the same. It is altogether wrong. There is no good *in* it; and *out* of it good was never brought. Are we debtors to the flesh? Never. What then? does the Lord demand obedience of the *believer*, under grace, as he did of Adam in innocence? No.—Among the differences between the law and gospel, which the Church of Rome delight to confound, Mr. PERKINS has observed the following: The law is natural; but the gospel spiritual. The law sets forth God's justice, without mercy; but the gospel sets out justice and mercy, united in Christ. The law requires a *perfect* righteousness *within* us; but the gospel reveals our acceptance with God, by *imputed* righteousness. The law threatens judgment without mercy, and therefore is called, *the ministration of condemnation, and of death*; but the gospel shows mercy in and by Christ, if we repent and believe. Adam in his innocence knew the law; but he knew nothing then of believing in Christ

Christ. The gospel commands faith, not as a *work* done, as the law does ; but as an *instrument* laying hold of Christ. The law commands faith in *general* ; as to believe in God, and to believe his word is true ; but, besides this, the gospel requires a particular faith in Christ the Redeemer, whom the law never knew. The law does not command repentance, for the knowledge of the law was in Adam's heart, when he needed no repentance ; true repentance, therefore, is a saving grace, WROUGHT *and* COMMANDED *only by the* GOSPEL. The law commands obedience every way perfect, both in *parts* and *degrees*, and allows none other ; but the gospel *commands*, and, in CHRIST, *approves*, IMPERFECT obedience ; that is, an ENDEAVOUR in all things to obey and please God, if it be without HYPOCRISY. The law commands obedience, as a *work* to be done, for the obtaining of salvation ; but the gospel requires obedience ONLY to testify our *faith* and *thankfulness* to God.—The church of ROME, therefore, erreth *grossly*, in confounding the law and gospel, which indeed, are *far* differing ; and so we must *believe*, if we would COME into, and HOLD *the right way that leadeth unto life*.—Such were the sentiments of Mr. WILLIAM PERKINS, formerly of Cambridge. They are somewhat abridged ; but worthy in this state, or as they stand at large, in his comment on Matt. v. 17, of the reader's diligent attention ; provided he enters into his leading design, and over-looks

looks a few words which do not so happily express the authour's meaning.

Mr. Fuller says, " * When the covenant of works was broken, the law of God reverted back to its original form, retaining only its power to command and to punish the transgressor. God no longer considered himself in covenant with man, and men *ought* no longer to obey it as a covenant of life and death ; but simply as a rule of life, without expecting any proper reward for their obedience, seeing they cannot produce such a one as the law demands. Yet so far as they have gone, or continue to go, contrary to this rule, they are justly liable to all the consequences. Those especially who reject God's way of salvation by Christ, and thereby appeal, as it were, to the covenant of works for justification, must abide those consequences in their full extent."

This period is in the true dictatorial strain ; to which some readers are reluctant to submit. May we not ask, what was the *original* form of the law ? May we not desire our authour to prove, that at *first*, it was simply a *rule* ; that, after some time, God made that rule a *law* ; (for a simple *rule* is not a *law* ;) and that lastly, he turned the law into a *covenant* ? May we not intreat to be told how Mr. Fuller gained such information, that " when the

“ the *covenant* of works was broken, the *law* of “ God REVERTED back to its” *supposed* “ original “ form ?” May we venture to ask, who gave our authour *authority* to say, that men (meaning *all* men,) ought to regard the *moral law* SIMPLY as a *rule* of life ?—Let him not wonder if some should ask him, *Who* is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Where wast *thou* when God laid the foundations of the earth ? declare, if *thou* hast understanding.—Between the formation of ADAM in the image, and after the likeness of the ALEIM, and the covenant which was made with him, as the visible root and head of all men, who will demonstrate that any time elapsed? The first moment of his existence he knew he was a *man* ; the *first* man ; a *complete* man ; the *federal* head of all men, and that, at best, he was BUT a MAN. To admit that Adam was MADE upright, and in the *image* of God, and to suppose that prior to his fall he was *gradually* taught the nature of a *rule*, of a *law*, of a *covenant*, and that he was under each a part, till the three were united, is all conjecture.

¹ Dr. Gill has much better expressed what seems to be collected from the word of truth. He says, “ God gave a law to *Adam*, which was in the “ form of a *covenant*, and in which *Adam* stood “ as a covenant head to all his posterity.—The “ natural law, or law of nature, given to *Adam*, “ was *concreated* with him, *written* on his heart, “ and

¹ Body of Doct. Div. p. 497.

“ and *engraved*, and *imprinted* in his NATURE from “ the BEGINNING of his *existence*.”—On the breach of this covenant, the *curse*, (which every continued act of disobedience augments, which every deviation from that which is law, or right, increases,) *pursues every transgressor*, and ever will, till he *flees for REFUGE to lay hold upon the hope set before us*. That *fleeing* is the effect of *favour*. Contempt of that refuge, indeed, or neglect, (which never are without preferring something else to it,) is inexcusable; but positive *approach*, as well as free *access* into that asylum which God has granted the guilty, are, alike, of God. He *only* that believes enters into rest. But to teach men that *previous* to their entering into THAT rest they are only under the law *simply* as a *rule*, or that they ought to be so; or, having entered into THAT rest, to contend, such persons are still *debtors to do the whole law*, is as injurious to the kingdom of Christ, as it is inconsistent.—It is to no purpose to affect to be displeased, or to feel, and express resentment. Among brethren, *authority* cannot be *very* great; but *argument* may be invincible.—If, then, every man be not under a covenant of works till he is a *believer* in CHRIST; if it is not OF GOD that any are, in any sense, in him, and if being, by a new birth, in Christ, and begotten again to a lively hope, such persons are not *become dead to the law* as a COVENANT *by the body of Christ*, that they should be married to another, even

to him who is raised from the dead, that they should bring forth fruit unto God, let those arguments be poured forth that mock resistance, and defy assault.

To cry up human nature, or to cry it down, if by such language it is supposed we are to say any thing of it, which is contrary to fact, is equally unwise. Is it, then, without dispute that there is not any natural inability in man to do the will of God? or to keep the *whole* law? Has our natural abilities suffered in no respect by the fall of Adam? Are our passive capacities and active powers exactly as his were in a state of innocence? Would they have been as they now are but for what is called *moral* evil? Is not all *natural* inability the result of *sin*? Is it not also the occasion of adding sin to sin?—Have those who have vaunted most of their *little* distinctions between *natural* and *moral* ability well considered the ^m Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty? It is supposed they have not. But is it not extraordinary that a respectable gentleman, who is at the head of an *academy*, should talk in this manner? Are not the young men who are under his care, sent to him to *improve* their *natural* abilities? Are not such improvements supposed to *qualify* them for the pulpit, so that, from his *tuition*, they may *expound the way of God more perfectly*? Do not his reputation and emolument,

^m See an ingenious pamphlet under that title, by Benjamin Rush, M. D.

ment, as a TUTOR, rise on such success? Yet a gentleman of this description says, " " There is " no natural inability in man to do the will of " God ; he has all the members of the body at " his command, and all the faculties of the soul." Were this as true as it is untrue, unless our frame and faculties were as perfect as Adam's in innocence, and the will of God exactly the same to each of us as it was to him, the assertion would do this worthy TUTOR no honour. But has this gentleman all the members of his own body, and all the faculties of his soul *always* at his *command*? If such language do not cry *up* human nature, it is not likely that any man can cry it *down*. Had good old *John Bunyan* only glanced at our TUTOR's *assertions* and *inferences*, in his quaint way, probably he would have said, " Except my " *Lord WILL-BE-WILL*, all things are *now* in " pretty good order in the famous town of Man- " soul."

It may be offensive to suppose, that gentlemen who have not only all the members of their body, but all the faculties of their soul at their own *command*, should not see clearly the consequences of their own assertions; yet, whether they have not each of them, (the worthy TUTOR himself, as well as our pious authour,) sowed that seed which, as it grows up and ripens, they will reap with sorrow, perhaps, it is already too late to consider.

Such

Such an admonition shall not be softened by any apology. It was written without rancour, without a wish to lessen the good degree of reputation which each of these teachers, in their own way, have obtained, without envy, in reference either to their present, or expected felicity, without being afraid of their resentment, which their goodness will not suffer to be dreadful, and therefore, it shall remain without beseeching them not to be offended.—The sentiments which are here censured they approve: and, when it is considered in what manner those sentiments have been communicated, and with what effect, it would argue unmanly timidity not openly to oppose such opinions. *Opinions*, which under the colour of writing against *Antinomianism*, have already been drawn out to an alarming length. For what can be alarming, or, at least, offensive, to them *who count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that they may be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but THAT which is through the faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is of God by faith*; if the following questions and conclusion may not be so considered?

“ Do we, by the righteousness of Christ,
 “ personally honour God? Do we, by that
 “ righteousness, experience the exalted pleasures
 “ which are only to be found in the practice of
 “ holiness? Doth the righteousness of the Redeemer
 capaciate

“capaciate for communion with God? Is it by
 “THAT we enjoy the testimony of a good con-
 “science, and a delightful sense of the approba-
 “tion of JEHOVAH? *Surely not.* The righteous-
 “ness of CHRIST not answering these important
 “purposes, can never supply the place of our
 “OWN personal obedience to the *moral law*, by
 “which ALONE these ends can be answered.”—
 So much, at *present*, for *human ability*.

V. On addresses to sinners.

Whether the following language on this subject, contain what will be deemed contradictions, or whether what is here adduced should have been classed with that kind of obscurity of which so many specimens have been given already, they who are able to determine need no information; nor is the question itself, worthy of much attention.

Mr. Fuller says, “ ° We allow, that no sort of
 “hope is held out, in all the book of God, to any
 “sinner, as such considered. It is to a sinner con-
 “sidered as *penitent*, that the gospel holds out its
 “golden sceptre; and to him, and to him only,
 “that is convinced of sin, and of his lost condition
 “through it, the *promise* of salvation is to be *pre-
 “sented.*”—But if there be no sort of hope for any
 sinner, as such, in all the book of God, it cannot,
 with truth, be said, that any thing which the sinner
 heard

heard from that book, or that any word which he found in it, was the *original* ground of his hope. Some internal change; it seems, previously existed, which, as it was perceived, and thought sufficient, became the immediate ground of the *good man's* expectation. — Till sinners are convinced of sin, and of their lost condition through it, our authour thinks the promise of salvation should not be so much as *presented*. What does Mr. Fuller mean by the *promise* of salvation? Does he intend any particular promise of salvation to A or B? Of presenting such a promise there is no danger; because no such promise exists. The promise of salvation is connected with belief of that which is *testified* concerning the person and grace of Jesus Christ. So that, if the *testimony* of Jesus Christ be not received, salvation cannot be enjoyed. For, *in him all the promises of God are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us*, who believe. Must these promises not be *presented* to sinners, as *such*, but be kept out of sight till ministers shall suppose they are sufficiently convinced of sin, and of their lost condition? Are *penitents* only to hear the joyful sound? — Let us ask a prior question. What is essential to repentance? Does the law, as a law, produce *it*, unto life? The law may be, the law is, *subservient* to the gospel. It is, however, *distinct* from it, and *inferiour* to it. Of the gospel alone can it with truth be said, *it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that*
D believeth

believeth. Let the law be preached; let it be expounded *ably*, and without *diminution*; but let it always be remembered, “*p Lex est lux, quæ lucit*
“ & ostendit, non gratiam Dei, non justitiam & vitam,
“ sed peccatum, mortem, iram & judicium Dei.”
 As this fact is recollected, the following will be felt, “*Lex in usu suo, sine velo, occidit.*”

Suppose any man was convinced of sin, and of his lost condition through it, is this man to be told he ought to *surmount* the depravity and danger of his tremendous situation? The infamy of being conquered by corruption is indeed very great; but is not the glory of victory over sin, equal to the shame of being overcome by the corruption of our own hearts? Who *ought* to have that glory? a glory with which compared, Creation itself, seems not so great.—On the entrance of sin, it is certain, that a deserved curse, or such salvation as was equally unmerited, and unexpected by *transgressors*, but every way worthy of *JEHOVAH*, must be the lot of all men. If the latter, by whose *wisdom*, by what *price*, by what *power*, must such redemption be designed, obtained and applied? Surely, transgressors have neither wisdom to devise, merit to obtain, nor power to apply this *salvation*. Should however, the *report* of it be transmitted to them, (for to many it is not,) it is possible they may multiply transgression on such indulgence. That the *guilty* remain rational, that they are favoured with
 revelation,

p Lutheri Loci Communes; de usu Legis Theologico.
 P. 53, 54.

revelation, that any of them are the subjects of those impressions which are from on high, all this is not of *justice*, but of *favour*. But these favours may be slighted, or perverted. Such misconduct is *criminal*. Without superiour favour to convert them from the error of their ways, it is *ruinous*. What, in such a situation, is their duty? To convert themselves? or, for each transgressor to say, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.*

Let it be farther observed, it is not our being convinced of sin, and of our lost condition through it, that is immediately connected with the promise of salvation; because such conviction may exist with a very *legal* temper. If, therefore, the *testimony* which God has given of his *Son* be unknown, not believed, or disapproved; in short, unless it be cordially received, the sinner is at a wide distance from the enjoyment of the gospel, and, till the atonement is properly received, he ever will. Why, therefore, withhold glad tidings from him till some preacher shall conjecture his previous repentance has prepared him to receive the grand report?—The best way to try the reality and worth of any man's repentance, is to lead him, if you can, to the cross of Christ. As he stands affected to Jesus Christ, and to him as crucified; as you perceive he is disposed to trust in him, boast of him, and be obedient to him, so you may estimate the sincerity, and spirituality of his penitential temper.

Notwithstanding this inadvertence of our authour, it would be *unfair* to conclude that he intended sinners should qualify themselves to receive the gospel; provided we allow him to be *sincere* in the following declaration, and hence the apparent *contradiction*. For our authour says, “^a to require inherent qualifications, in order to warrant our coming to Christ, nothing can be more discouraging and perplexing to a poor distressed sinner.”—“So also, if, instead of using exhortations to sinners, *merely* that we may *use the means* which God has *appointed*, we give them to suppose, that any work which is truly good, is in whole or in part, to be effected by, or ascribed to themselves, then,” says Mr. Fuller, “do we dishonour the Spirit of God!”—These are remarkable concessions. To be consistent with them a great part of Mr. Fuller’s TREATISE and DEFENCE must be materially altered. The duty of man seems here to be reduced to *one article*, which is, *merely the use of those means which God hath appointed*. So another authour, whom Mr. Fuller has pretty closely followed, says, “^s God does not require more of *any* man than the right use of what he hath.” But if our authour, or his worthy friend, can imagine that a right use of what *any* man *has*, is all that God requires, it inevitably follows, that *no* man need *seek* for what he has *not*. How such a sentiment is either to be reconciled

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^a P. 163.^r P. 168.

to the *law*, or the *gospel*, some are utterly unable to conceive.

Mr. Fuller foresaw danger on this delicate subject. He owns, there have been extremes in such addresses, and he wishes to avoid them; but it is doubtful whether he has yet found the middle way. He says, “ ‘ It ought to be confessed, that too
“ many of those who have dealt in addresses to
“ unregenerate sinners, have sadly neglected *the*
“ *very spirit and glory of the gospel*. In such ad-
“ dresses, perhaps, it has been too common like-
“ wise to go aside from the scriptural intent of
“ them, and to dabble in Arminianism.”—If such *dabbling* be any proof of misinterpreting the scriptures, and if *Arminians* are able to judge what is friendly to their own cause, and likely to promote it, it is high time for our authour to consider, whether he is not already gone a *little* further from *the very spirit and glory of the gospel* than he himself intended.—Should Mr. Fuller perceive he has been inconsistent, and be affected with the perception, let him not be too much cast down. *Pride* blushes at the sight of unexpected weakness in ourselves. But pride is more distant from true peace than *misapprehension*. In many things we offend, all of us. The most consistent character is only a little less inconsistent than his neighbours. Anxious and minute attention are seldom of much service. If the great *out-lines* be

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well

well drawn the picture will always be above contempt.—*Be honest. Honour God. Follow what is best.* That *believer* who keeps such precepts properly in view, will never be ridiculous, but if reproveable, worthy of respect.

VI. *On the Love of God.*

Of our love to God, Mr. Fuller informs us, it may be remembered, there are two sources. One is, what God doth for us ; the other, what he is in himself. Love ascending from us to the Supreme from a principle of gratitude, whose honest and affecting language is, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me!* this kind of delight in God, our authour thinks, comparatively speaking, is but a low attainment. Love unalloyed by a sense of personal interest in Jesus Christ, ascending to God on perception of his natural, but unrelieving excellence, this kind of delight in God he extols with strange extravagance. What he considers as inferiour affection, or love of a second sort, he supposes to be the duty of *some* men only, and that too, in proportion as certain favours have been granted to them, and actually received. But his purer, nobler flame, this, he contends should burn in *every* breast, and that to kindle such a passion is the incumbent duty of *all mankind*. This *pure* affection, our authour supposes, may exist *without* the benefit of revelation ; while that which is *not*
so

so pure in his estimation, is, in its best appearances, said to be *dependent on it*.

These are strange paradoxes, which *every* man will not attempt to explain; but *who* will try to unriddle the following assertion, and preserve at the same time our authour's peculiarities? " " *Good men*," he says, " are under exceeding " higher obligations" to love God " for his peculiar *gifts* to them, as the God of all grace, " than *carnal* men are." But why should GIFTS so *exceedingly* oblige, if all obligation be founded on *injunction* and not on *encouragement*? or why should those gifts so much oblige *good* men, if the enjoyment of such favour be not essential to the existence of *christian* goodness? or if it be a *mean* and *low* thing to believe our personal interest in Jesus Christ? If it be true that such love to God is the *purest* and * *noblest*, which originates, not from the *bounty* or *blessing* of the Almighty, but from such abstract perceptions of his *beauty* and *excellence*, as cannot remove transgression, or bring pardon, or peace, to transgressors, the question may be repeated, why are good men under such uncommon obligations for those favours which, at best, do not produce a *better* kind of love to God than where those special gifts are yet *unknown*, or where evidence of personal interest in such favour is actually *unenjoyed*?

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" P. 98.

* P. 88, 98.

“ This way of ^v speaking of love to God, Christ, and divine things, namely, as for their own excellence, some may represent,” says our authour, “ as an *abstract metaphysical subtilty*, “ tending to perplex plain sincere christians.—The authour of this reply to Mr. Fuller is of that opinion. He has been confirmed in it by trials and observations more in number and variety, (and such as tend to give an impartial enquirer satisfaction,) than some people have yet had opportunities to experience and consider. Mr. Fuller, however, assures us, that his way of speaking of the love of God, “ will be found, “ if fairly examined, adapted more than a little “ to the encouragement of plain sincere christians.”—What a pity, if this be true, that *prophets, apostles*, and other *inspired writers*, have left us so little instruction on this profound subject. How remarkable also is it, that *Arminians, Mystics*, and ^z *Deists*, have been the greatest detailers and defenders of *disinterested* love! The indigested things which our authour has said on this subject are evidently imported; and he may live to see, what others have long since seen, that they are not worth the cost of importation.—Of the *excellence* of God, the writer of this section has no doubt; nor is it *diminished* in his estimation, since he has ceased to talk about it as Mr. Fuller now

is

^v P. 107.^z See the Minute Philosopher, Dial. III.

is disposed to talk. But, when we pass from what is thought to be *inconsistent* in our authour, to that which is supposed to be *erroneous*, perhaps, it will appear, that Mr. Fuller himself, has not any view of the Divine excellence besides that which is *relative*. Neither the word nor works of the Almighty carry us any farther. All beyond it is *light which no man can approach unto, which no man hath seen, nor can see.*

VII. On Humility.

From whence Mr. Fuller has received some of his singularities, is not any where more apparent than in what he has said on *humility*. Here, it cannot be doubted that America is his market, and that Messieurs EDWARDS and BELLAMY are chiefly resorted to.—“^a If,” says Mr. Fuller, “a man were but to view himself as he really is,” (which our authour does not always suppose is difficult to do,) “he would find two grand reasons for humility: the one, his littleness as a creature, and the other, his odiousness as a sinner. In the first view, he would shrink into nothing, as it were, before the eternal ALL; but in the last, he would think himself infinitely worse than nothing! The most poisonous serpent, or loathsome toad, would be incon-

D 5

“ceivably

^a P. 96, 97.

“ceivably less odious in his sight, than he must
 “know himself to be in the sight of God. He
 “would appear to himself a most ugly, vile, filthy
 “creature; utterly unfit for the society of holy
 “beings; yea utterly unworthy to breathe God’s
 “air, or tread upon his earth! He would think
 “it a wonder that the very creation of God did
 “not rise up against him, and send him quick to
 “hell! He would impute it to the mercy of God
 “that they were withheld, by his making a covenant
 “for him with the very stones, and beasts of the
 “field! And all this would fill his heart with
 “holy gratitude. Yea, and when he had gone
 “thus far, he would be far from *thinking much* of
 “his humility. It would seem no more for him
 “to think thus of himself, than for a thief, or a
 “murderer, to think himself odious to mankind.
 “—Now *all this* is men’s duty, unless it can be
 “proved that they ought not to think of them-
 “selves as *they are*, and as *God has said they are*.”

“GOD *has said they are!*” Have we, then,
 throughout this curious quotation been reading the
sacred page? Has our authour *exactly* copied in
 all these coarse expressions, the oracles of God?
 Far from it. Had the sobriety and majesty of the
 scriptures been carefully consulted, such extrava-
 gance of expression, which our authour occasion-
 ally has introduced, would not have sullied and
 obscured his TREATISE and DEFENCE. But if *all*
this is men’s duty, (that is, every man’s duty to make
 himself,

himself so remarkably humble) why has our authour so described this part of our duty, as leads us to think, not what *any* man is to *do*, but of an *act* which cannot possibly be his *own*? *Humility*, according to Mr. Fuller, “ *consists in a spirit brought down to our condition.*” This, our authour supposes, is “ that humility in fallen men, with which salvation is connected.”—From this definition of humility, and the subsequent remark, let us *first* observe, what is the *condition of fallen man*. Is it not *unclean*? Is it *our* duty to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, or, to *make ourselves* clean? Are not *perception* and *persuasion* of moral defilement from the Lord? Why are these favours imparted to any man? Is it not to approach *the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness*? Is it not to confess as David confessed, and to pray as he prayed, when he said, *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*?—Mr. Fuller says humility “ ^b consists in a spirit brought down to our condition;” but does he consider what spirit that ought to be? He allows our condition to be fallen and polluted. But being so, would it be a proper temper to act as if those facts did not exist, or as if we, in our fallen state, ought not only to confess that God might be justified, and clear when he judges, but that we ought also to rise above our fallen situation, and be, by our own

D 6

might

might, what alone *can*, or indeed, *ought* to be expected, by the power of the Holy Ghost?—Further; if humility “ consists in a spirit BROUGHT “ DOWN to our condition,” is it not plain, that spirit which is BROUGHT DOWN, did not *bring itself down*? Is it not equally clear, if the *glory* of that power which brings down the spirit of a fallen creature to his condition, be such as *is*, and ought to be peculiar to the Holy Ghost, he will never give either that *power*, or that *glory* to sinful men?

What our authour has imported from America, he has mixed with his own manufacture, but not to advantage. For, what ever occasion Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS may have given him and others, to talk in an uncommon style on humility, yet that celebrated professor has wisely warned his followers against confiding too much in unusual, though of late sufficiently common expressions of seeming self abasement. If a man should say, *It seems to me, none are so bad as I*, Mr. Edwards answers, “ ^c Do not let the matter pass off so; but “ examine again, whether or no you do not think “ yourself better than others on this *very* account; “ because you *imagine* you think so meanly of “ yourself. Have not you an *high* opinion of this “ humility? and if you answer again, *No; I have “ not an high opinion of my humility; it seems to me I* “ *am*

^c Edwards on religious Affections, P. 233, 234.

“ *am as proud as the devil*; yet examine again,
 “ whether *self conceit* does not rise up under this
 “ *cover*; whether on this *very* account, that you
 “ *think* yourself as proud as the *devil*, you do not
 “ think yourself to be *very humble*.”

It is supposed, our authour had not leisure for such severity of examination when he wrote his TREATISE. So far was he from any frightful apprehension that *the very creation of God would rise up against him, and send him quick to hell*, that, without any adequate provocation, he rises up against the living and the dead with such want of due respect, as is, to say the least of it, widely distant from christian humility. A few specimens of his *humble* behaviour will convince us of something worse than verbal contradiction.

Of the litigious Jews, our authour says,
 “ ^d They seemed to think, as *many* do now,
 “ that attendance on the means was all that was
 “ incumbent upon them, and therefore were
 “ offended with Christ for insisting on any thing
 “ farther.” The *many* here censured, and compared with carnal Jews, are *Calvinists*. Our authour has too much sense to charge *Arminians*, or *Baxterians*, with such a crime. Mr. Fuller himself, notwithstanding this censure, would be thought a Calvinist; keeping, however, at due distance from those ^e *calumnies* which it is supposed the enemies of the Calvinistic system have
 thrown

^d P. 41, 42.

^e P. v.

thrown upon it. Thus reformed, we see how he treats his old friends. But is this *humility*? Is it *honest*? Is it *consistent*? That it has even the appearance of *humility*, who, unless it should be himself, will once imagine? That such ill-treatment is *honest*, (if by *attendance on the means*, and being *offended with Christ for insisting on any thing farther*, we are to take those words in their usual meaning,) will always be contradicted. Besides, is such behaviour *consistent*? Has not Mr. Fuller assured us, that what is beyond the use of those means which are appointed, and has any tendency to make a sinner suppose he is the efficient cause of any thing which is *truly* good, is to ^f dishonour the Spirit of God?

Our authour can indulge severer censure against his former friends. He says, “ § Men, by sin,
 “ have lost all just ideas of the beauty of God’s
 “ character, and so have sunk into a *total* dis-
 “ regard of him; are become dead to all sense
 “ of moral excellence; yea, and it is come to
 “ this, that they now think themselves not
 “ *obliged* to love him. Blinded, through the
 “ love of sin, to all the real excellencies of his
 “ nature, they cannot think themselves bound
 “ to love a Being of his *character*. All this is
 “ shocking:—but should the *friends of God* join
 “ with them in it, and say, True you *can-*
 “ *not* love him, you have no *principle* to excite

“ you

^f P. 168.

§ P. 89.

“ you to such a thing, therefore, we allow you
 “ to be free: this would be shocking beyond
 “ expression!”—Is this the language of profound
 humility? Is this the genuine effect of the *purest*,
noblest kind of love that can be exercised? Is this
 an irresistible evidence that our authour's spirit is
brought down to his condition?

Either Mr. Fuller believes that his *calvinistical*
 opposers, whom, in this *farce*, he calls *the friends of*
God, do, in general, teach such things as he has
 been pleased to mention, or he does not. It is
 said in *general*, for if he knew of a few individuals
 who talk so strangely, which it is supposed he does
 not, would this warrant such promiscuous censure?
 If he does believe it, what shall we say to such
 profession of respect towards them as this: “^h I
 “ have been ready sometimes to *weep*, from an ex-
 “ pectation of hard thoughts, and perhaps hard
 “ words, from several of those with whom I
 “ could rejoice to spend my days in cordial friend-
 “ ship?”—Our authour, indeed, of late, has made
 it rather doubtful with whom he would rejoice to
 spend his days; but, can it be difficult to deter-
 mine who were intended when he first indulged
 such professions of respect? or when, (probably
 forgetful of his preface,) he afterwards indulged
 such alarming apprehensions? If, on the contrary,
 Mr. Fuller does not believe, that those whom he
 calls *the friends of God*, and with whom he could
 have

have rejoiced to have spent his days, are either so ignorant, or so impudent, as he has led some to suppose they are, he might well expect their severe rebuke. But it will be more generous, and it may be as useful, to leave him to his own reflections.

For his conviction, the following questions and additional remarks are introduced. What does Mr. Fuller mean by men's thinking themselves not obliged to love God, to love a Being of his character, and by supposing they are justified by some, in being destitute of such affection? Does he think that any intelligent Calvinist, (against whom his censures seem to be pointed) is offended with the *character* of God? Does our authour fancy that such a Calvinist, believes that God is not *worthy* to be loved, *with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind*? Does Mr. Fuller imagine Calvinists are so ignorant as not to see that want of love to God is a *loss* which no created good can supply, or not to perceive it is so *vile* a disposition as admits of no excuse? Do they not always contend, that as love fails, iniquity abounds; and, that the wages of sin is death? Do they ever insinuate that want of love to God is less criminal because they have fled for refuge to the hope set before them? or that the transgression of the law is not sin, because Christ has magnified it, and made it honourable? Do they teach it would be less offensive to God to break any of the commandments of the moral law, (as explained by our Lord himself, in

in his sermon on the mount) than if they had never heard of the Redeemer? Our authour knows that such suspicions are as ungenerous as they are unjust.—But this reply will not give Mr. Fuller and his friends satisfaction. They insist, *if it be men's sin to violate the moral law, it must be their duty to keep it perfectly; and that the law includes and requires, of all men, saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.* Who does not see that this is a MERE inference? Nor is it difficult to prove it a FALSE consequence. Yet, on this inference, hangs almost all the frightful things (and they are not a few) which our authour has thrown together. This false consequence leads him to false alarms, and, as is usual, to be unmindful of the true. Thus terrified our authour loses his temper, his former friends are treated unjustly, and, when he has made, and repeatedly buffeted a man of straw, he conceives he has disburdened the calvinistic system of a number of calumnies, and brought forward clear and honourable conceptions of the divine government.

Mr. Fuller is entreated to consider, that when Joshua said unto the people, *Ye CANNOT serve the Lord; for he his an holy God;* he did not say this to “allow them to be free” from that service. He is desired to recollect, that when the ALMIGHTY said to the Jews, by his servant Moses, *O that there were such an heart in them!* or rather, *Who will give, that they had such an heart in them as they* promise

promise to manifest, this was not said, to exempt them from obedience; but to teach them, they could have no access to JEHOVAH without a mediator: nor with one, unless the Lord gave them an heart to serve him. For they were taught without *that* they would never serve him *acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*. Is it credible, that when our Lord said, *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him. Without me ye can do nothing*. Is it credible, that he said these things to *allow* of any evil, or to *deter* from the proper pursuit of any moral good?—When the *Eunuch* was asked this question, *Understandest thou what thou readeest?* He said to Philip, *How can I, except some man guide me?* Did Philip deny that fact? Did he conceive such an *ingenuous confession* was an *artful excuse?* or did Philip suppose he could give the *Eunuch* understanding? Did he not *preach to him Jesus*; in confidence that the Spirit who said, *Go near and join thyself to this chariot*, would be with him, and make his efforts to instruct the *Ethiopian* successful? Was he disappointed? Why are we pestered, then, with objections which our authour dare not level against *superiour* characters? Why are we teased with *innuendo's* and far fetched *hints*, which have no foundation but in the *humble* apprehension of those who let them fly abroad?

Mr. Fuller is pleased to charge his calvinistic opposers with *want of reading, with want of knowing better,*

better, and with other imperfections not a *few*. When the CHARACTERS who are censured, on the one side, and the *reading, knowledge, and years* of their formidable CENSOR, on the other, are duly considered, will such a contrast give the intelligent reader a high idea of our authour's modesty? Surely his *precepts* are hitherto too *coarse*, and his *censures* too *daring*, to captivate a tolerable understanding. Unless indeed, it should be prejudiced against the doctrines of grace; for then, coarse wit may seem wisdom, and absurdity itself may be dignified with the name of argument.

How often does our authour call his adversaries *Arminians*? Yet what Arminian has disturbed his repose by resentment, or violent contradiction? Has not a reputable *Arminian* highly extolled him, and given him, and his abettors, a respectful, if it be not a cogent invitation, fully to embrace his leading sentiments? When this sensible *Arminian* talks of being ¹ *unfortunate* enough to differ from Mr. Fuller and his friends, in contending for the sense of a particular text, it must be considered as a *compliment*; since he endeavours to bring them over to his own opinion. But when Mr. TAYLOR informs his correspondent, he is exceedingly obliged to him for the perusal of Mr. Fuller's pamphlet, and says, “^m I desire you will believe I am

“ quite

¹ OBSERV. P. 81.

^m OBSERV. P. 3,4.

“ quite sincere, when I tell you, that I *very*
 “ highly value your *pious* friend. I think it
 “ an *unspeakable* mercy that the God of love has
 “ led *him*, and so *many* other *good* men, to a clear
 “ conviction of the truth, in a matter of such
 “ *vast* moment,” we cannot but give him *credit*.
 —From this rejoicing, however, we may infer,
 that after our authour's best efforts to put a stop
 to that ⁿ outcry of which he so much complains,
 and to remove that ^o ignorance he so much laments,
 his brother *Taylor* seems resolved to defeat his
 design.—It is an afflicting situation, when it is
 with great difficulty a man can be what he *seems*
 to be, or seem to be what he *really* is.

From Mr. Taylor's joy at our authour's late
 conversion, we may farther infer, as Mr. Taylor
 admits a man may be *pious* and *good*, and may
exceedingly oblige him in writing on religious sub-
 jects, not only while he does not hold *general*
 redemption, but even while he is writing strongly
 against it, it follows the *belief* of Mr. Taylor's
 fundamental doctrine of Christ's dying for all
 men, is not of that importance he has so fre-
 quently attempted to prove.—It is presumed,
 Mr. Taylor cannot avoid the force of this infe-
 rence, unless he should plead that though Mr.
 Fuller has, indeed, written expressly against
general redemption, yet his leading sentiments
 undoubtedly are in favour of *that doctrine*, and

cannot

cannot be established without *it*. Such a plea, if fairly supported, would confirm the title of the present *section*, and show our authour to be very *inconsistent*; but should Mr. Taylor make use of that argument, would it not be paying a poor compliment to *himself*, as well as to Mr. Fuller?

It might be dangerous to descend from these views of our authour's want of temper to some particular instances of his want of respect for the ^a *deceased*: this might awaken that degree of anger which, when roused, it would not be easy to rule. Let that task therefore be omitted. As we may more safely bewail the multiplied proofs which demonstrate the deceitfulness of the human heart, so we may more profitably consider that instance which is fairly before us. For, while our authour wrote his most exceptionable censures, and unpleasing paragraphs, he did both with a ^r *hope*, that he had not taken any undue freedom, with either the *dead* or *living*; with a ^s *belief*, that he had a right to demand from some, and to expect from others, a fair and candid perusal; with an ^t *apprehension*, that the man who pointed out his mistakes, would be justly entitled to every mark of honour and christian respect, and with an ^u *opinion*, that if we must dispute, we are never so safe as when we enter on controversy with fear and trembling! He assures Mr. Button

God

^a Mr. L. Wayman, Mr. J. Brine, and Dr. J. Gill.

^r P. xi.

^s P. xii.

^t P. xii.

^u DEF. P. 89.

God will guide the *meek* in judgment, the *meek* will he teach his way. But of our authour's *meekness*, and christian forbearance, has either Mr. Button, or any other *opposer*, yet had the highest opinion?

Should it be said, the laws of controversy admit, that the nature of free debate requires, liberty of speech, force of argument, and sometimes warmth of expression; all this is allowed. Nor would an able and honest disputant, nor would any man who is not either a coward, or a bully, wish the laws of unfettered controversy to be abrogated, or the nature of free debate to be changed.

A man of fair views and of good courage, is ready to say to his contending brother, *Let him smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.* If, however, while any man attempts to smite his brother, because he thinks he has erred, he should endeavour to wound his real reputation, this would be *provoking*. If, while so doing, he should affect to say, he thought himself *a most ugly, vile, filthy creature, utterly unfit to breathe God's air, and to tread upon his earth*; such incongruity, such unmanly provocation, under the appearance of being *uncommonly humble*, would be *very* provoking indeed.—Open rebuke may be esteemed; the burst of passion may be forgiven; but to be an advocate for *profound humility*, and, at the same time, to
indulge

indulge illiberal censure, is this likely to produce conviction, or to secure respect?

The freedom of these pages will probably produce resentment. Let it come. The cost has been counted. Conscious of inward *esteem* for our authour, not on account of his *obscurity*, self-contradiction, or *error*, but because of the *truths* he yet *retains* and *defends*; conscious of a predominant wish that in this debate he may be able to overcome every objection that is not properly supported; should it at last appear, that in attempting to count the cost, something has been left out, or not duly considered, it is still presumed that if Mr. Fuller's resentment should be kindled, or if the displeasure of his friends should break out on this occasion, it will be borne with *fortitude*, and received with some degree of real *instruction*:

It is possible that while complaining of *obscurity* he who makes the complaint may be thought obscure. Should it be obscurity of the same *kind* he has thought proper to find fault with, it would be his disgrace; but it is supposed that competent judges will not be of that opinion. It is equally possible, that on charging Mr. Fuller with being *inconsistent*, it will be thought, he who has exhibited that charge may expect to have it retorted. Should that be done, one point, however, would be gained, which he has long laboured to prove; namely, that the human understanding is weaker, and less to be depended on, than either our authour, or they
who

who have adopted, or fallen into his leading ideas, are willing to suppose.—Perhaps, what has been said against its being the duty of a *bad* man to be a good man, and against its being the duty of every *good* man to be as holy as Saint Paul, will either be considered by some, as inconsistent, or as erroneous and dangerous. Be it therefore, remembered, that what has been said on either of these subjects, has not been said against that which is *desirable*, or against the *duty* of *lawful endeavour*, (and no man is crowned except he strive *lawfully*;) but to show, that saying it is the *duty* of a bad man to MAKE HIMSELF a good one, and that it is the *duty* of a good man to MAKE HIMSELF the *best* man, or most perfect character that ever existed, is language of dangerous tendency. For the word *duty* cannot extend to those actions which are not our *own*, or to the possession of the *power* of God. Though the Lord has obliged us to *seek* it, yet not to *possess* it; because THAT is imparted or withheld, as it seems good in his sight. The most lawful, and laudable endeavours towards relative perfection, should always be considered in that connection, which the authour of the Epistle to the Hebrews has placed them; who having said, *Let us go on to perfection*, adds, *and this will we do, if God PERMIT*. If it be true, that unto every believer is *given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, either that gift has *no* relation to *holiness*, or if it has, it must be admitted, however
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it may be our duty to *covet earnestly the best gifts*; or having them, to use our utmost efforts to find out the *more excellent way*; or being in it, to walk up and down in the name of the Lord: yet still, it must be acknowledged, that *without Christ we can do nothing*. We can neither deserve nor command his assistance; nor is it our duty to wish that this were possible.—In short, all that has been said of duty runs on this idea, *that it is our lawful endeavour to know and do the will of God*. It is presumed most men, under no temptation to revoke this idea of duty, usually entertain it, and act upon it. On this ground, it is affirmed, it is not our duty to think we are *innocent*; because the fact is, we are *guilty*. Nor is it our duty to make ourselves *innocent*; because this is *absurd*; for where pollution is, personal innocence is gone for *ever*. Nor is it our duty to make an *atonement* for our guilt; because the sufferings of the *guilty* can never *satisfy* for sin; or remove transgression. Nor is it our duty to *demand* or *merit* a report of God's salvation; such *insolence* and *arrogance* ought not to be called by that *name*. Nor is it our duty, if favoured with the gospel, to make it *effectual*; because we are obliged to *renounce* that idea, and to *implore* such energy to answer that end, which neither *is*, nor ought to be *our own*. If then our duty be *something to be done by us, being what we are*; or, if it be *our lawful endeavour to know and do the will of God*, on

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this

this supposition, the following remarks are deserving of some attention.

First, no mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did the *whole* of his duty. Who, at all times, has made a right use of what he *had*, or makes a proper use of what he now *has*, and seeks, in a becoming manner, for what he *has not*? *Secondly*; could we suppose a single exception, so that any man, from his earliest infancy to hoary hairs, had always done, in every respect, his duty, it may still be affirmed, that *this* would, by no means, merit *salvation*, or be a proper ground of hope that, *for so doing*, he should possess that *immense* and *unmerited* BLESSING. His duty, however exactly performed, could never satisfy the covenant of works, or be the procuring cause of any interest in the covenant of grace. As to the covenant of WORKS, *it* could neither satisfy the preceptive, nor the penal part of that *broken* covenant. Not the *preceptive*; for all our *natural* defects and disorders, are the continued consequences of our first revolt from God.—Shall that state which has disabled itself, and is not properly affected with its disability, be allowed to plead with a *lawful* and *Sovereign* POWER, that, however disabled, *such* a SOVEREIGN ought to be contented with the *right use* of what is *left*?—Not the *penal* part; because in this case it is not credible that any fallen creature should make an atonement. As a *fact*, this is impossible. Besides, the *honour* of making *compensation*

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to the divine government is such, that he who is converted to God, will not so much as wish it should be conferred on him.—As to the covenant of GRACE, not any thing in the compass of *our duty can bring judgment to victory*, or make the gospel victorious; because it was never designed, far from it, that human efforts should make it effectual unto salvation. *For, saith the Lord, AS the rain cometh down, and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth, and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I PLEASE, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I SEND IT.*—We are every way left without excuse, yet does it follow that our best and lawful endeavours are sufficient for us? *We have destroyed ourselves*; we still indulge destructive principles, and are more or less addicted to destructive pursuits: but in the LORD ALONE is our HELP. Ought it not to be so? Can it possibly be else where? *By NATURE, we are the children of wrath even as others. By GRACE are we saved, if saved at all, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.* Ever may we rightly recollect, *A man can receive nothing except it be given him of God!*—With this fact some may be vexed, and others sorry; to some, however, it is

incontestible; and it is so, without the least offence. *What have we, whether it be an office, gift or blessing, we have not received? Capacity to receive, as well as good to be enjoyed, are alike of God. He that made the light made the eye, and every object the eye beholds. Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. AMEN.*

SECT.

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S E C T. III.

Mr. Fuller's leading propositions considered as
ERRONEOUS.

IT often has been said,

“ To err is human, to forgive divine.”

But, whatever may be our errors, we shall always be unwilling to accept of forgiveness if we think we have not erred; or think that our error is useful. He who can, on any principle, excuse his errors, either as being *mental*, or as being the necessary result of *natural* inability, will always think himself insulted to be told, that for such errors he needs forgiveness. Terror may make him silent, or even accept an escape by *pardon*, from tremendous punishment; but he who searcheth the heart, knoweth such a man is inwardly disgusted with the degrading proposition.

It is not intended thus to insult our authour. If he has erred, his errors have not been injurious to *all* his readers. On this account, indeed, he merits no praise; but he who thinks he has been in some measure *instructed*, by Mr. Fuller's mistakes,

is not so likely, as others, to indulge private resentment.—Errours like those which are supposed to be before us, it would be arrogant, in any man, to pretend to forgive. By such arrogance, the quiet of our authour's mind shall not be disturbed by his present antagonist. As no *personal* offence has been received, as he knows not that any *conviction* will follow his present attempt to convince our authour of his errours, he does not mean to affect the stile of a conqueror; much less to require unmanly submission: but as the errours here opposed have been injurious to some, as Mr. Fuller himself does not contend for the *innocence* of error, as the injury arising from erroneous sentiments seems to be proportioned to the *kind* of error which is propagated, and to the *manner* in which it is received, retained, disseminated and defended, it cannot be unlawful to consider what those errours are, in our authour's TREATISE and DEFENCE, which still may be injurious to society.

That men may be injured by him who attempts to serve them, and who would rejoice to be a blessing to mankind; that they are sometimes much injured even by authours who have, in various views, been a blessing to society, men of understanding will admit. Where is that *good* man who has done no *harm*? Paul withstood Peter to the face, *because he was to be blamed*: yet Peter was a greater blessing to society than we shall ever be. Nor was he of less public utility, nor had he

less

less reputation after that deserved rebuke. That Mr. Fuller is a good man, that he has been of use in his stated and occasional labours, that he deserves to be commended for his vindication of truth and righteousness, in several pages of his *TREATISE* and *DEFENCE*, are neither unknown, nor reluctantly acknowledged: but that he has *erred*, it is presumed has been frequently manifested already, and it is supposed this *section* will confirm that unpleasing idea.

It may be recollected that *seven* articles of apparent contradiction were produced in the last section. If our author has been in so many articles inconsistent, the number of his errors must be equal. For, in propositions really inconsistent, one assertion infers the negation of the other. So that, if *this* stands, *that* must fall; or, if *that* be conclusive, *this* must be erroneous.—The inconsistent have always those advantages which they who are a little more accurate cannot expect. By being abstrusely inconsistent, they gratify men of opposite sentiments. By indulging such contradiction, their catholicism is more likely to be commended than their incongruities are to be detected. If they should meet with opposition, they generally have as much colour for evasion, as they have inclination to evade. Should you say, for instance, Mr. Fuller affirms our *cannot*, in reference to *spiritual* acts, is *nothing else*, but *a will not*. He might answer, I have said the

reverse ; I have even used the word *cannot* where no man ought to imagine that *will not* would be a proper substitute ; for, I have said, “ men ought to expect no reward for their “ *obedience*, seeing they ^a CANNOT produce *such a* “ *one* as the *law demands*.”—Should you avail yourself of that assertion, and insist upon it, Mr. Fuller supposes we are *naturally*, as well as *morally*, unable to *produce such obedience as the law demands*, it is probable he would be offended ; because, he repeatedly assures us, “ ^b in all cases “ of *natural inability*, the party is *excusable*, even “ though he may, *by his own fault*, have brought “ that inability upon himself.”—Either this language is *equivocal* or *frightful*. What ! may a man, *by his own fault*, increase his inability to keep the moral *law*, and then be allowed to say, it can, in *equity*, only demand a right use of what is left ? *Debauchery* and *excess* (the two faults mentioned by our authour) if carried to that length which he has supposed, take away the *heart* as well as the *limbs* of the transgressor ; but may he who has hurt his mental powers by his own folly, consider *his inability is really an excuse* ? The mother of Solomon was not of this opinion. She said to her royal son, *Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes, strong drink : lest they* drink

^a P. 144.^b DEF. 52.

drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.—Should our authour say, he talked of the loss of our *limbs*, by our own fault, and not the loss of our *understanding*. It would be replied, the faults he has mentioned, may affect the one as well as the other; and, having said, “in all cases of natural inability, the party is excusable, even though he may, by his own fault, have brought that inability on himself,” he has left an open door for some to *excuse* those crimes which admit of no excuse. Such are the privileges of those who are obscurely inconsistent. Who would envy their felicity?

It is often easy to confute when it is difficult to convince. This will ever happen where inclination to maintain some system, or some sentiment, is very strong, and reason is comparatively weak. But success in every laudable enterprise is from above. To use what seems to us the most probable means of doing good, in the best manner we can, is the orbit in which we are ordained to move. We are not to create, but occupy; not to command, or merit, a blessing, but to entreat that favour, in the path of duty, and leave the event with God.

As the same articles are to come before us in this section as in the last, (there they were considered as *inconsistent*, here as *erroneous*;) and, as there seems to be no reason for any different arrangement, let us take them in the same order as be-

fore ; beginning with the *ground* of religious obligation, and ending with *humility*.

I. *On the GROUND of religious obligation.*

To possess spiritual dispositions, and to perform spiritual duties, to do both by *that* faith in Jesus Christ which is allowed to be peculiar to the elect, and to be the gift of special grace, nay, to be and do every thing which *any* man can either be or do who is born of God, or who is most eminent in godliness, all this our authour supposes *every* man ought to be and do previous to regeneration. The *ground* of such obligation, Mr. Fuller says, is the *injunction* of the moral law abstractedly considered ; which he thinks is *very different* from *encouragement* of every possible description. But can there, accurately speaking, be a *law* where there is no *lawgiver* ? Can there be a *moral law*, which does not contain, with its precepts, any inducement to regard it ? If there be no inducement to obey, can the law itself be considered as *good* ? Must not every man who endeavours to be obedient, believe it is *better* for him to obey than to transgress ? Can any person imagine that the will of God, and our *best* interest, are ever at variance ? The evidence of this fact may be obscured in some *particular* trial ; but the nature of his will, and of those perfections which God has manifested by his law, will always give the up-
right

right *general* satisfaction. If the sons of *Belial* were told, that though they have strong seducements to violate the will of God, the prohibition not to transgress, is founded on *mere will* and not on *wisdom*, would they not have that colour for disobedience which the word of truth will not allow?—Let us be thankful that our *best* interest, and our *undoubted* duty, cannot, even for a moment, be divided, except it be in our disordered imagination.

A rule may be distinguished from a law : but a law, in the strict and proper sense of that word, is essential to obligation. *Where no law is, there is no transgression. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law : for sin is the transgression of the law.* Law is the will of the Superiour Power commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong. If this Superiour be not acknowledged in our actions, they cannot be considered as done in obedience to his will. If he be properly acknowledged in our actions, it is plain, we consider his will as law ; that is to say, as just and good.—There is a Superiour Power who is every way SUPREME. Whatsoever is in opposition to his will, is not law ; and therefore, not binding to conscience. But what the will of the SUPREME is, concerning us, except in general terms, may be of difficult discussion. Confessions the most solemn, prayers fervent and continued, controversies, some of them serious, and others

grievous, have, in all ages, born witness of this fact. In proportion as we know what the will of the Lord is, and are reconciled to it, (which no man is further than he believes his best interest and his duty are united,) we shall say, *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

We shall not only desire to be obedient, but to obey under such influence, and from such motives, as will not suffer us to question whether we have obtained *grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.* Can this be done, or be designed, without *inducement*? Why should *that* be divorced from *injunction*? What end can it answer? Will it give us a higher idea of the *wisdom*, or of the *law* of God? Will it make our obedience more humble, or more cheerful?—

Our authour is entreated to consider whether it was not the business of the first *Seducer* to insinuate, that if God had said to our first parents, *Of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,* IT WAS A MERE INJUNCTION, nor was there any *reason*, to comply with such a prohibition. Let not Mr. Fuller be offended with this request. It is believed, he has no design to *seduce* his followers. Should he, however, be astonished, if the subtilty of THAT serpent which tempted Eve, is found to be something greater than he has yet conceived?

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Every temper has its snare. He that wishes to extol the *grace* of God, so that, the Lord alone, may be exalted, is liable to unexpected deception. He that is zealous for the *law*, may imperceptibly depart from the very spirit and glory of the gospel.—*If while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore, Christ the minister of sin? Do we then, make void the law through faith? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?*—These are specious objections. Grievous to those who love God. But some, impatient under this cross, so preach what they call the gospel, that if this offence of the cross of Christ has not ceased under their ministrations, it has not been for want of their best endeavours to roll reproach away. If Satan, in opposing the gospel, were not to do it under the *appearance* of preserving *piety*, and promoting *good works*, men who love to glorify God in their conduct would not be so soon deceived. It is remarkable, that they who were deceived at COLOSSE, *after the commandments and doctrines of men*, were deceived in things which had indeed a SHEW OF WISDOM in will worship, and HUMILITY, and neglecting the BODY, NOT IN ANY HONOUR TO THE SATISFYING THE FLESH.* It does not content Satan to attack the flesh by *pleasures*, and by objects which are agreeable to it; nor even by *adversities*, in order to beat down by force him that may

* Mestrezat.

may be corrupted by enticements. He attacks piety even by that which is most *holy* and *sacred*, and endeavours to turn us from God by the *love* of God, or by a zeal for his kingdom and glory. *Who can understand his errors? Who has not need to say, Cleanse thou me from secret faults? and to add, Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me? — Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer!*

It may be said, injunction is the ground of obligation, and inducement only a *motive* to be obedient. But this seems saying too little, when religious and moral obedience is the subject of discussion. For, in such obedience, no injunction which is not *wise*, and expressive of the *will* of God concerning us, can possibly be the *ground* of our duty. He who is willing to evidence a proper regard to the will of God, always considers whose will it is. IT IS THE LORD. This reflection is the root of his submission, and active endeavour to comply with the injunctions of JEHOVAH. He may not, in some particular cases, *perceive* why he is called to be obedient; but even then, he has such a general and fixed *persuasion* of the *divine* CHARACTER, that he has no doubt it will be best for him to obey the Lord. Abraham, when called, *knew not whither he went*: but he knew *who* called him; nor was he a stranger

stranger either to the nature of his calling, or to the *end* of that distinguishing favour. The children of Abraham, who are circumcised in heart, obey from love; from that love to Jesus Christ which belief of his word produced. Acquaintance, therefore, with HIM whose injunctions they obey, is *always* their inducement to be obedient. Increased acquaintance induces so strongly, as to surmount all opposition. Peter and John answered their most formidable opposers by saying, *Whether it be RIGHT in the sight of God, to hearken unto YOU, more than unto GOD, judge ye.* But whatsoever is *right* is *best*. Common sense will ever be of that opinion. That which is right may be attempted to be run down; but they who enjoy it, know that grace and truth must inevitably and eternally triumph, with a glory that cannot be expressed. Such are compelled to say, *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*—God does not only *command*, but *persuade* JAPHETH to dwell in the tents of SHEM. In those tents, when tempted to depart, the converted *Gentiles*, as well as *Peter*, say, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

II. On the EXTENT of religious obligation.

If the *extent* of religious and moral obligation be not so represented by Mr. Fuller, as to make it the duty of the unregenerate to be the efficient cause

without asking? To *seek* direction, and to *discover* without supplication? To *knock*, and yet, by his own strength, to *force* open the door?—It has been seriously owned, that Mr. Fuller is a man addicted to prayer; and it is believed his own example encourages that important duty. But were he to pray in *strict* conformity to his own creed, would not our authour be afraid to hear his own voice?—In such a prayer, perhaps something like the following address would make a part of his devotion.

“ O Lord, I do not beseech THEE to take
 “ away a heart of stone, or to give me an heart
 “ of flesh, as if it were not my duty to take away
 “ the former, and also to make myself a new
 “ heart, previous to the operations of THY SPIRIT.
 “ I do not beseech THEE to write THY law in
 “ my mind, or to make me an *Epistle of Christ*, as
 “ if I ought not to do these things *myself*. For,
 “ I cannot conceive, O Lord, how any work in
 “ me, which *I ought* not to be the DOER of, can
 “ meet with THY approbation. Nor do I beseech
 “ Thee to increase my *natural* ability. My *can-*
 “ *not* is nothing else but want of *will*. What,
 “ therefore, I humbly request is, that I may have
 “ such a degree of *moral* ability to keep the moral
 “ law, as may answer whatsoever is virtually
 “ contained in the gospel.”

Could any man compose a litany entirely
 corresponding with our authour's mistakes, how
 would

would he be shocked at the frequent repetition of
 WE BESEECH THEE TO HEAR US GOOD LORD!
 Every thing that deviates from that grace which
 bringeth salvation, is no where so *evidently* incon-
 sistent and indefensible as it is in an act of devotion.

Whatever Mr. Fuller may feel at the thought
 of such worship, he is not afraid to say, " It
 " seems difficult to conceive how any work in us,
 " can be either necessary, acceptable, or pleasing
 " to God, unless that work be previously our
 " duty." This seems very incautious language.
 Consider, first, the *extent* of our authour's propo-
 sition; it reaches to *any work in us*. Let the
 proposition *itself*, be careful observed. " It is
 " difficult" he says, " to conceive how any work
 " in us, *can be* either *necessary, acceptable, or pleasing*
 " to GOD, unless THAT WORK be previously
 " *our duty*." What does our authour mean less
 by *duty* than the *performance* of the work? When
 is this our duty? *Previously*. Previously to what?
 To^d our being *being born again*; to our being, as it
 were, *new-made*, and while such is the *errour* of
 the mind, and *enmity* of the heart, that we must
undergo an entire renovation before we can be *set*
right. Is this the voice of a *friend*, or is it the
 voice of a *stranger*? Before we too much regard
 it, let us reconsider whither we are going.

Is not spiritual *illumination* a work in us? But
 is it the duty of the *unenlightened* to *illuminate* them-
 selves?

selves? Our authour, himself, says, “ The
 “ *revelation* made at the time of our first converfi-
 “ on, consists in the understanding being *enlightened*
 “ to see *that* which was already revealed and
 “ reported before.” He also adds, “ The word of
 “ God gives light, the Spirit of God gives dis-
 “ cernment.” In confirmation of this, he pro-
 duces Psalm cxix. 105. and Ephesians i. 18.
 But if those who are converted are *enlightened*, and
 if it is the Spirit of God who gives *discernment*,
 is it the previous duty of the unconverted to
illuminate and convert themselves?—Is our authour
serious when he says, “ It seems difficult to
 “ conceive how any work in us, can be either
 “ necessary, acceptable, or pleasing to God, unless
 “ that work be previously our duty?” Some
 may, in this instance, be tempted to suspect his
 sincerity, because when he is so *inclined*, he can
 easily remove this mountain. For instance,
 speaking of *assurance*, (which he always supposes
 must be supported by the evidence of an internal
 change of heart,) he quotes and approves the follow-
 ing words of Mr. CHARNOCK “ ‘ Unbelief,” says
 the pious Mr. Charnock, “ is a *sin*; the want of
 “ assurance is *not*; to HAVE IT is *not* our duty,
 “ but *God’s dispensation*; he has obliged the
 “ *believer* to *seek* it, but not to *possess* it.” May
 not what Mr. Charnock has said of assurance,
 with so much propriety, be extended to every
 thing

thing else which is God's dispensation? What shall be excepted? May we not, in many cases, be obliged to *seek* what we are not obliged to *possess*? Is not this always the case, where the blessing sought is absolutely at the pleasure of God to withhold, or to grant? Will our authour give us a catalogue of those blessings, (natural, moral and spiritual,) which are not of this description? Surely, we may be obliged to lawful endeavours, in lawful things, while our illicit endeavours on the one hand, and attempting to be efficient causes, and exercising ourselves in matters too wonderful for us, on the other, may be as *wrong* as all our lawful and expedient endeavours are indisputably *right*?

But the important question, it seems, is this :
 “ *Do we need the Spirit of God to enable us to do our duty?* ” WE DO. Are we, therefore, obliged to approve of such inferences as our authour is inclined to draw from this leading proposition? Perhaps, we are not. We will try at least, to stand fast in the liberty *wherewith Christ has made us free*; and if we can prevent it, no *brother*, however *respectable*, shall inadvertently lead us back again to bondage. Before the inconclusive inferences of our authour be too much regarded, let the nature of *just* inference and of *real* obligation be diligently considered. Let also this *question* be well weighed. *Do we need the Spirit of*

of God ONLY to enable us to do our duty?—Are there not *blessings* to be enjoyed, as well as *duties* to be discharged? Blessings, which he who came to bless us, designed to be our strength? Blessings by which he turns us from our iniquities, and prepares us for the present and future enjoyment of HIMSELF? Blessings which, though they are the source and spring of *new-obedience* , must not be degraded by the name of duty? For, though the proper discharge of duty is *our excellence* , is it not confined to *our acts* ? Blessing, however, is not *our excellence* , but, as it is imparted, and enjoyed, it is THAT which makes us to excel. Why are things so different and so distinct to be confounded?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we meet with this admirable text: *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen!—*

Does it not appear to be the intention of the sacred penman to *teach us* that they who are called the sheep of Christ, are to hear and obey his voice? That they are to do this, believing that the will of Jesus Christ is the rule of christian duty? That they are to consider the will of their Lord, and the will of his Father, to be the same?

That,

That, in *every* good work, it is the Father of mercies that worketh in believers to will and to do, of his own good pleasure? That the perfection, as well as the commencement of christian conduct is from HIM? That such energy, as is here requested, is a favour? That such favour should be sought through the blood of the everlasting covenant? That every good work from believers should correspond with the nature and design of the New Testament? That such petitions should be presented to the God of peace in the Name of our Lord Jesus, in order to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help us effectually, and to our Redeemer's glory, in every time of need?—How these things can be fairly contradicted, or how all this should be supposed to contain nothing more than a request that men might make a right use of their *natural* or moral ability, or, how all this should *only* give us the idea that what is here requested, was previously the duty of all men, who are favoured with the gospel, to *be*, to *have*, and *do*; if our authour can conceive and vindicate such notions, surely he will not withhold such conception and proof from those who do not, at present, make the least pretence to such uncommon understanding.

So long as coming boldly to the throne of grace, is actually enjoyed and properly esteemed, the reign of grace will be admired. But should prayer be *so* bounded by the idea of *duty*, that we
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should think it not right to pray for any thing which we do not believe is *our* previous duty to perform, we shall either rush into idle and vicious extravagancies of expression, or we must be miserably contracted. On that poor plan, who can ever reach the meaning of these gracious expressions? *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the house of Egypt: OPEN THY MOUTH WIDE AND I WILL FILL IT!*—When we read of the riches of God's inheritance in the saints, of their being brought unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, of their being presented to HIMSELF, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, is it credible, that every work in us, which made us ask the way to Zion above, and made us meet to enter on that inheritance which is both incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, is it credible, that every thing wrought in us, for those ends, ought to have been done by ourselves? Is it difficult to conceive how such operations can be either necessary, or pleasing to God, unless that notion be admitted?

Does not such doctrine as our authour endeavours to establish, unavoidably lead to that kind of boasting which God has for ever excluded? Yet Mr. Fuller has not been induced to this by the least degree of hope that any man, previous to his conversion, will ever do, or be inclined to do, what he supposes all men ought to perform, and could, if they were entirely willing. It has been
thought

thought the ^h modern question was framed on purpose to ensnare : and Mr. Fuller, who has revived it, must know, that he strenuously pleads for a faith that never existed, nor never will ; *he* and his *friends* being *judges*. To say he *must know*, cannot be too strong an expression, since our authour thinks, “ ⁱ Unless the gospel could exhibit a “ condition that should fall in with men’s evil propensities, the aversion of their hearts would forever forbid their compliance.” Mr. Fuller says, “ ^k It is allowed, that the flesh will never be prevailed upon to choose, adhere unto, and delight in God ; nor do we ever expect it will. Nay, “ it might have been added, OMNIPOTENCE IT “ SELF CANNOT MAKE IT.”—What end, then, can our authour have in view ? It is this, “ That “ while we” ministers “ do our work of addressing the consciences of men, and pointing out “ to them what THEY *ought to be and do*, God “ may, by that, do HIS WORK of *convincing* them “ of *sin*, and so, in the end, bring them to a “ a compliance.”—Mr. Fuller admits, that to *convince* men of sin, is the work of God. Yet he supposes, not only that ministers should *endeavour* to convince them of sin, but that men ought to convince themselves. But what sin, in particular, has our authour in view ? Is it a deviation from any one of the *ten* commandments ?

or

^h See the introduction to these Thoughts.

ⁱ DEF. p. 105.

^k p. 181.

or is it the transgression of some *additional* commandment which he has thought necessary to impose? Some *virtual* injunction which, as he is disposed, he can find in the *decalogue*, or in the *gospel itself*?—When men are convinced of sin, what follows? “And so, in the end, bring them to a *compliance*.” With what? Here curiosity is disappointed, and conjecture must, if it can, supply the elliptical conclusion.

That which is not possible may seem desirable. Fancy may induce the belief of falsehood. Let us suppose desire and fancy operating strongly on this occasion: operating on a mind which once embraced such sentiments as the writer of these increasing pages has attempted to defend. Let us suppose they so operate as to issue in his conversion to Mr. Fuller’s leading sentiments. What language would such a convert adopt? Probably he might thus express the pleasing change.

“I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my
 “my mother conceive me. I was, by *nature*, a
 “child of wrath even as others. I was called,
 “without mistake, a transgressor from the womb.
 “As I advanced in life, I added sin to sin. I was
 “in my own apprehension, alive without the law.
 “But when it *came*, with a power I never felt be-
 “fore, sin revived, and I died. Yes, I through the
 “law, became dead to the law, that I might
 “live to God, by faith in Jesus Christ.—In
 “those days, I never thought that any *deviation*

“ from the divine law, whether it was by *mental*
 “ error, or by *verbal* transgression, could be
 “ defended. Nor did I ever imagine, that *want*
 “ of conformity to the will of God, could ever
 “ be *excused* by what is commonly called *natural*
 “ inability; whether such impotence was only
 “ the result of the first offence of Adam, or
 “ whether it was increased by my own offences.
 “ I *saw*, that in *Adam* all died. I *felt*, I had that
 “ which prompted me to sin like him. I *found*,
 “ I was left entirely *without excuse*. My *delight*
 “ and *degradation* met together in the leading
 “ article of my creed; which was, *There is for-*
 “ *giveness with God, that he may be feared*. Belief
 “ of such mercy, to such an end, was *life and*
 “ *peace*. I was healed and humbled at the same
 “ time; and diligence and diffidence were equally
 “ conspicuous *while* I had such confidence in God.
 “ —Of late, what shall I say? I will tell the
 “ naked truth. I began to be weary of *entire*
 “ dependence. What, thought I, must I ever
 “ be held in leading-strings? Ever be unable,
 “ in any respect, to help myself? Touched with
 “ such reflections, I was prepared, in some
 “ measure, to receive that treatise, which, in
 “ those mournful moments fell into my hands.
 “ Excellent *man! He taught me, what I pro-
 “ bably should never have discovered. That every
 “ thing laudable in us, is our duty to perform
 “ and possess, previous to divine assistance.
 “ That

* Mr. Fuller.

" That no spiritual act is excepted : That all
 " men have power to comply with the gospel if
 " they would, and are as able to embrace, as to
 " reject, Jesus Christ.—These and other assurances
 " from *such* an authour, supported, as I found
 " he was, by writers and preachers, by no means
 " disreputable, or unpopular, produced desires I
 " never felt before. Desires multiplied; resolu-
 " tions were formed; I forgot my former creed,
 " burst my bonds, and O ————."
 —The rest is wanting.

Happy is that convert who has *the Spirit of Adoption!* But whence that favour?—Of Adoption the Apostle said to the converted Galatians, *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.* To the converted Romans he said, *Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*
 —John thus speaks of this unutterable favour, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!*—
 But who are made partakers of this privilege? By whom is that blessing granted? In what manner is it conveyed?—The operations of the Holy Spirit have been considered in this order.
 † *First*, producing those necessary dispositions in

F 2

our

† Claude.

our hearts, which are essential to a cordial reception of Jesus Christ. *Secondly*, bringing us into actual communion with him, by faith. *Thirdly*, with this spiritual communion with Christ, bestowing on believers, the Spirit of Adoption. The evidence of adoption, to themselves, is a peace that passeth all understanding; to others, it is their being *followers of God as dear children*. This order seems to be confirmed by this expression: *After, or when, ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*.—Can such peculiar privileges as these be considered as duties? Who believes, that is not born of God? *Who can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost? It is the Spirit that quickneth.*

It has been repeatedly acknowledged, Mr. Fuller does not say, men can bless themselves, regenerate themselves, purify themselves, or be the efficient cause of any thing which is truly good. But he does say, It is their *duty* to do every thing which can be expected from the most eminent christian. Nay, he cannot conceive, if that be not granted, how any work in us, can be either necessary, acceptable, or pleasing to God.—If you ask our authour, whether any man can be a son and heir of God, otherwise than by Predestination and Adoption, he replies, No, this cannot be expected. If you enquire, whether those acts can properly be *ours*; he tells you that is impossible. If you would know
whether

whether blessings, as such, be our duty ; he is of opinion, that spiritual blessings, and the divine energy which gives us the enjoyment of them, cannot come under the notion of duties. If you would know whether it be our duty, who *believe*, to be assured of our sonship ; he says it is not. Nay, he contends, as has been before observed, that personal assurance, is a low and mean idea of faith. But if you ask him, whether it be not the duty of all men to *be* the sons of God, to *have* that faith which is peculiar to the adopted, and that disposition which can only exist by the gracious influence of the Spirit of adoption, he affirms that this is the duty of all men who are favoured with divine revelation.—Happy is the man who getteth understanding ! But, what shall we say of him who much improves his understanding by some paradoxes which our authour has attempted to maintain ?

Figurative forms of expression, in good authours, must have some *meaning*. Frequently they are *as replete* with meaning, and meaning too of the greatest moment, *as* the plainest forms of speech. It is well known the Scriptures abound with figurative terms. Let us consider whether some of them, very significant, would be intelligible on our authour's leading sentiments. He seems to be apprehensive they would not. " ¹ It is allowed," he says, " that God, in his word, does
F 3 " represent

"represent men's ignorance by blindness, their
 "stubbornness by deafness, and their total inac-
 "tivity for God by being dead." Our authour,
 as if alarmed at his own concession, adds, "But
 "these modes of speaking, it must be remem-
 "bered, are *figurative*."—With submission,
 something else should be also recollected. Our
 authour himself is fond of figurative expressions.
 Would he use them so frequently if he supposed
 they were destitute of meaning, or more liable to
 be misunderstood than unfigured forms of speech?
 Meaning itself, however difficult to be ob-
 tained, is a plain thing. It is often elucidated by
 metaphorical, and other rhetorical modes of ex-
 pression. The question therefore, when such
 words are used to this end, is, are they selected
 with wisdom? If they *are*, they cannot be changed
 to advantage. For instance, if these words,
blind, deaf, dead, when figuratively used, are
 properly introduced, no alteration will be thought
 an acquisition. Such terms, as they occur in the
 scriptures, cannot be altered to answer any valuable
 purpose. If in attempting to explain these words
 in Ephesians, *And you hath he quickned, who were
 dead in trespasses and sins*, a Commentator should
 say, *That is, and you hath he RUBBED UP, OR
 ROUSED UP, OR CHAFED, OR AWAKENED, who
 were SLEEPING, nay ALMOST dying, in your INFIR-
 MITIES*; would such a comment correspond with
 the

the text? Such a Commentator might as well change the *pronoun*, as the *figurative* words, and say, *And you hath IT quickned*, or say, *and you have I quickned, who were dead in trespasses and sins*.—On the other hand, if figurative words be not selected with wisdom, can we suppose that writer to be inspired?—Let it also be remembered, that when figurative words are used with the utmost advantage, they never give a *false* idea of reality; nor is the figure ever *equal* with the fact. *Adam was a figure*, and *but a figure of him that was to come*. Shadow and resemblance never give us what the Apostle calls, *the very image of the things*. The *sun* may be finely painted; the *moon* may seem to shine in the reflecting stream; but do any imagine, that the best picture of the rising sun, or the clearest resemblance of the harvest moon, equal the splendid objects which they represent? Death may appear to us tremendous. Resurrection from the dead may seem to some almost incredible. Nevertheless, to be dead in trespasses and sins, is a condition more dreadful than what is commonly called death; and to be raised from that deplorable state to newness of life, is that *metaphorical* resurrection, but *real* and glorious change of mind and manners, which cannot *exist* but by the *exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power*. When this

change commences, the *literal* resurrection of our Lord from the dead is acknowledged; and *the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death*, are so esteemed, that all pursuits, compared with these, are counted detrimental.—Plain and figured turns of speech, happily selected and applied, sufficiently conform to the nature of things to give us, in our present situation, the means of acquiring a just judgment, and ground for indulging sound belief: yet it must be acknowledged, that every form of articulation, carries with it some mark of human imperfection.

It is very true, figurative words have been sometimes misapplied; and at such mistakes some have been too much offended. On this subject, men of uncommon genius have † erred. But what assistance does our authour afford us to guard against an improper use of figurative terms? Does he not rather lead such untutored preachers, who may admire his leading principles, to form false apprehensions on this subject? What, for instance, would a young man make of these words, provided he had received, and was resolved to retain, the peculiarities of our authour? *Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.* The

Seat

† See the dispute between Warburton and Leland.

Seat of this sacred Epistle is said to be the *heart*; not of *stone*, but of *flesh*. The *Subject* of this Epistle is CHRIST; such a *knowledge* of him as produces devotion, and issues in that transformation which, though not fabulous, it must be confessed, is marvellous beyond description. The *Authour* of this Epistle is the HOLY GHOST; *ministered*, says the Apostle, *by us*, but *written*, *not with ink*, or by rhetoric, or moral suasion, *but with the Spirit of the living God*. Finally; if we consider what is the *End* of producing this *Epistle*, we have reason, from the whole chapter†, to conclude, it is to manifest that the ministration of the SPIRIT, and of RIGHTEOUSNESS, *exceeds in glory*. So that, while the ungodly are justified, and the unclean are sanctified, while they who are both ungodly and unclean in themselves, are *vivified*, and made *vigorous* in the ways of God, by the hope of his gospel, no flesh is allowed to glory in his presence; but, according as it is written, *let him that glorieth*, whoever he may be, *glory in the Lord*.—How embarrassed must a follower of Mr. Fuller find himself, with all those notions of what he thinks the previous duty of the unregenerate to *have*, *be*, and *do*, swimming in his head, should he undertake a *concise* exposition of the preceding text! It would be easy to put this matter to proper proof. But it will be *modest*, at least, if a young man should decline that arduous attempt.

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It produces sensations not easy to be described, when a writer seems disposed, not only to contend for that which cannot be defended, but to plead for sentiments as much against *the structure of language*, as they are remote from truth. It is evident our authour is not always wanting of words. Yet it may be affirmed he has found none, and it is thought he never will, to express his own ideas of duty with tolerable propriety. It is very common with Mr. Fuller so to state our duty as to describe, not what *we* are to do, but what *is* to be done, and *must* be done by another, if it be done at all. An instance of this strange inadvertence has been already given on our authour's description of *humility*; which deserves additional attention. “^m Humility,” says our authour, “is that state of mind, wherein, in some sense or other, it is *brought down*, or *lies low*.” He afterwards adds, “ⁿ That humility in fallen man with which salvation is connected, consists in a *spirit brought down to our condition*, whether it respects our temporal, or spiritual concerns.” Now, unless those convenient words, *in some sense or other*, save our authour's reputation in this description of humility, an ingenuous confession, that he has made use of *passive* terms to denote our *active* compliance with some supposed rule of duty, would be his best apology.

Some

Some such apology is the more necessary, since Mr. Fuller so frequently represents the acts of *another* to be *our* duty. Even when he *halves* it, as in his attempting to distinguish between *blessing* and *disposition*, we know not which is to be *first*; or what, as matter of our duty, is to be included in spiritual *dispositions*.—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him," says James, "ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Would it promote becoming attention to this excellent advice should any person affirm, That it is the duty of all men to possess wisdom, and to act wisely, *previous* to their perception of its nature, their persuasion of its worth, and prayer to obtain the incomparable blessing—That wisdom is essential to our real happiness, who but the unwise will ever dispute? That it is the will of God, that we should seek it, and endeavour to obtain it, as he has directed, is incontestable. This, therefore, is our duty. Not to occupy what God gives us to that end, not to request his blessing on our occupation, not to request those positive and seasonable communications of his favour we continually need, in every changing scene, would argue either ignorance, or disaffection. But that it is our duty to be wise without prayer, without the lawful use of lawful means to obtain wisdom, or to be wise in matters too wonderful for us, or even in things pertaining

to salvation, beyond what it pleases God to impart, is at least, a little more than any man is able to prove.—AGUR said, *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.* He also said, *ADD thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* Moses gives us the same admonition. *Ye shall not ADD unto the word which I command you, neither shall you DIMINISH aught from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.* The canon of Scripture closes with a similar caution. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

III. On Faith.

The apparent contradictions of our authour on this article have been considered. His *errors*, or mistakes, are now to be inspected. But in truth, he has been so *in and out*, and has warped so much, *this way and that*, on what he has said on believing, that it is difficult to pronounce what is, or will be, his settled opinion. Should it be said, that his capital definition of faith, *Belief of the truth*, is defective, and liable to be abused, (which, at least, is probable) yet, it must be acknowledged, our authour introduces other assertions on this subject, which may convince the careful reader, he is quite willing to include in *Belief of the truth*, every thing that can be fairly expected. It may, however, be of some use
to

to make the following remarks on the article which is now before us.

I. Whatever faith may be, Mr. Fuller always supposes it is the duty of every man to be possessed of saving faith; and generally, in that extent which leaves no room, objectively considered, for any addition. He apprehends, that which prevents our believing, what he believes, are ignorance, pride, dishonesty, and aversion of heart. This is the more remarkable, since our authour has thought proper to inform us of his lingering so long in making his late change, before he turned completely to what he now calls, *the good old way*. Can Mr. Fuller believe it was his duty to have entered into his present path, before he so much as suspected he was wandering, or while he warmly contended for those tenets he now condemns? When suspicion first approached, why was he detained almost *four* years in painful suspense? Why, for so long a period, did doubts not only occupy his mind, but, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, rise higher and higher? Was all this entirely owing to *ignorance, pride, dishonesty, and aversion of heart*? Would it have hastened his conversion roughly to have been told, it was owing to something extremely vicious, he did not sooner embrace his present opinions? But what security has any man, if our
authour

* See, the title of his TREAT. and Prop. ii.

1 See, Prop. iv.

2 P. 139.

author were again to change his sentiments twenty times, he would not manifest the same impetuous disposition?—Reluctance impartially to consider the evidence of any important fact which is fairly stated, is undoubtedly an evil temper; but where this evil temper does not exist, may not our author's creed, in some of its articles, still be rejected? These thoughts have been written on that idea. Is it a just one, or is it without foundation?

II. Assurance of personal interest in Jesus Christ, is too often a subject which Mr. Fuller is disposed to undervalue. Yet, with his usual readiness to contradict himself, he represents assurance as a *privilege* bestowed on believers, and, as their being *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise. If assurance of personal interest in Jesus Christ be a *mean* and *low* idea of faith, what must be considered as that which is *noble*? According to our author, it is to believe the *truth* and *excellence* of those things which are reported in the word of God, and not to possess an evidence of our *interest* in them. Let us endeavour to give due attention to this distinction.—Our author speaks of *things*, of their *truth* and *excellence*, and of our *interest* in them. The *things* of which he speaks are invisible; only to be known by revelation; only to be received by faith. Faith in these things, Mr. Fuller calls *saving* faith;

faith ; and the scriptures assure us, that the end of our faith, if it be the faith of God's elect, is salvation. But how is this salvation enjoyed ? First, we have the report of it, by the word of truth and grace. That report contains glad tidings ; testifying of Christ, his peculiar sufferings and eternal glory. What is testified of Christ, and promised to them who receive that testimony, is contained in so many assertions, or *propositions*. In our enjoyment of this salvation, *perception* of the meaning of the divine report, in some of its important propositions, takes the lead. *Persuasion* of the truth of the things, thus reported to us, follows, with unfeigned *esteem* for the blessings of the gospel. Such persuasion is always connected with the *desire* of personal interest in those blessings. As the evidence of such interest, is by us, undoubted, *expectation* of future glory is confirmed. As such hope abounds, a *conversation* becoming the gospel, is constantly the effect.—*Every man that has this hope in him, purifieth himself, as he is pure.*

If this view of the subject be *just*, the manner in which Mr. Fuller has undervalued the idea of *personal interest* must be *obvious*. Whatever may be the folly and danger of unsupported confidence, to represent THAT as *mean* and *low* which is well founded, is unfair.

Does not the desire of *interest*, suppose the *truth*
and

and *excellence* of the object desired? Being preferred to all others, it is sought with anxiety, and obtained with answerable satisfaction.—Yes; but people may seek an object for their own *advantage*, and not for the truth and excellence of the object *it self*. But suppose the advantage sought by the reception of a particular Person was the honour of that Character. Suppose our being willing thus to receive him, was the best proof that could be given of the accuracy of our *judgment*, of the proper disposition of our *heart*, and of its being under the most desirable influence it could possess. Would not all this be sufficient to justify our conduct? But if this Person came on purpose to do us good; ever went about on that errand, thought himself rejected if not received as a *Saviour*, and still is exhibited to a saving purpose, are they to be applauded who magnify their speculations; and treat with disrespect an interested affection for Jesus Christ?—After all, what evidence does any man give that he has an heart affecting view of the SAVIOUR's excellence, who does not ardently desire to be found in him? Who can love *the only Son of God*, and not wish to have communion with him? Whoever had that wish, but with some view to his own *advantage*?

III. The instances of the *Syrophœnician* and *Centurion*, introduced by our authour, do not answer his intention. Each of them sought,
and

and obtained an interest in our Lord's compassion. Persuaded he was able to supply their *wants*, and to remove their *fears*, persuaded that such favour might be obtained of him, without price, and without personal desert, with such belief, they implored his assistance. Can it be supposed that what our Lord did to increase their happiness, lessened the value of *his* favour, or the propriety of *their* petitions? Another poor afflicted woman, who sought every where else for a cure in vain, said to herself, *If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.* To that timid, trembling petitioner, our Lord replied, *Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.* Would her act have been of greater value, if she had stood in no need of *healing*, or if she had not sought a *cure*?—Let those who have not any *want* to be supplied, nor any *fear* to be removed, nor any thing further to *expect*, amuse themselves as they can, with romantic ideas of disinterested affection; but let them not, by incautious modes of expression, distress the *poor and needy*, who must *drink or die*. God allows the distressed freely to call upon him in *their trouble*, and *upbraideth not.* *He sends his word and heals them; and delivers them from their destructions.* He hears, with approbation, that reiterated and grateful acknowledgment, *O that men would praise the Lord for his GOODNESS, and for HIS WONDERFUL WORKS to the children of men!*

Belief

Belief in distress, gratitude for benefits received, and thankfulness for promised and expected felicity, seem to weigh but little with our author, and with many more, when ballanced with *their purer flame*. Yet, after all the fine sayings Mr. Fuller has attempted to throw out, on something like *platonick* love, let him consider, as an honest man, how he could answer the following address from a friend who wishes, if it be possible, to receive instruction.

DEAR SIR, as you think yourself to be more disinterested in your religious pursuits than some ever pretend to be thought, permit me to ask, whether, in proportion as you judge you prefer the truth and excellence of things, without any direct view to your own advantage, you do not, on that very account, think more highly of your *own* virtue? Whether you do not think it more probable that by indulging such sentiments, you shall be saved, and esteemed, than if you were absolutely to renounce such pretensions? Say, *Sir*, whether the decided preference you give to that kind of love to God, which you consider to be the purest and noblest that can be exercised, is not founded on this principle, that, by so doing, you may obtain such evidence of your being a *Christian*, nay, of being an *eminent* christian, as you suppose is not otherwise possible to be obtained?

Were

Were our authour to deny this, it would involve him in difficulties he could not easily surmount. To grant it, would be to confess, that between him and those who professedly seek their own advantage in every duty, (believing their duty, their benefit, and the glory of God to be always connected,) the only difference between them and himself would be this, that they do it *honestly, openly*, and without pretence of *superiour* affection; whereas Mr. Fuller, who, at bottom, is exactly in their situation, disowns the fact. He pretends to sublimer ardour, soars on high, in his own imagination, and looks down on meaner mortals, sometimes with the appearance of *pity*, and sometimes with the appearance of *disdain*.

IV. If there be any who would have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, divorced from fellowship with him, and unproductive of a desire to have communion with believers, they are deceived; and such deception is injurious. This being admitted, it may be asked, whether on the other hand, there can be much *fellowship* where there is no *appropriation*? Whether appropriation can in truth be expected, by him who supposes it either a *presumptuous*, or a *mercenary* thing, to claim a personal interest in the blessings of the gospel! or in the favour and distinguished compassion and friendship of our Lord Jesus Christ?—They who dare not believe the goodness of their state,
without

without an evidence of the fact, are to be commended. But is *happiness*, by the medium of glad tidings, at any time, designed to be the *source* of action? If it be not, why is it said, *Hear, and your soul shall live? Blessed are they who know the joyful sound?* May not belief produce that *kind* of evidence which is followed by *another*; and which shows we have not believed in vain? It is true, *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; but it is equally true, that without seeing the Lord, no man shall be holy. That to *see the Lord*, is sometimes put for the *future* enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and sometimes for that *present* belief and affection, which are essential to the expectation of future felicity, must be admitted. This view of the text before us is safe; and superiour to any opposite comment on those memorable words of our Apostle. They assure us, that unsanctified persons cannot inherit the kingdom of God: but do those words inform us that any man can be sanctified without faith in Jesus Christ?

V. These remarks on our authour's mistakes on *faith*, shall be concluded with this additional observation: Mr. Fuller has discovered his low esteem of the doctrine of assurance, because it represents faith as ^a terminating principally on something *within us*; namely, on the work of
grace

grace in our hearts. Nevertheless, in favour of those persons our authour is pleased to call *modest*, sincere christians, he says, “ ‘ these being full of “ goldly jealousy, are afraid of being mistaken ; “ and dare not believe the goodness of their “ state without evidence.” But what evidence of the goodness of their state, do modest, sincere christians want? Is it something *without* ; or is it, at last, something *within* ? In what, therefore, does the *termination* of faith, ^v as it is described by our authour, differ from that description which he opposes? Faith rests, on that which is found *without* ourselves. But if, in so doing, those effects follow which purify the heart, of course, they must be *within*. If any dare not believe the goodness of their state without *evidence*, they are to be applauded. If, however, they overlook the *nature* of that evidence which ought to give them satisfaction, if they are *displeased* with it, if they are *reluctant* to obtain it, or *extravagant* in their expectation of finding more than the nature of the case will admit, they should be better taught. If, on any of these articles, they are inadvertently led astray, as such negligence is discerned, it will, we presume, be sincerely lamented. If so, such persons will endeavour to be more cautious in their future conduct.

IV. On

‘ P. 8.

v P 6.

IV. *On Human Ability.*

Of the different and discordant assertions of Mr. Fuller on human ability, various remarks have been made ^u already. Should the plan which has been ^w proposed be pursued throughout, our ability, in reference to that distinction which gave *birth* to this controversy, will again be considered. At present, therefore, we shall only make the following remarks.

I. Our authour boldly asserts there is no *bar* to believing but what lies in the depravity of the human mind; such as ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, and aversion to God. If this be true, previous to a sinner's conversion, will it be otherwise relative to growth in grace? If true in both cases, what a picture, as has been noticed, has our authour given us of himself? What a compliment also, is this to those who yet retain his former sentiments? If it cost HIM *four years* to get the conquest of wilful ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, and aversion to God, before he could embrace his present thoughts, can it be expected that *others* should make greater haste?—That *inexcusable* depravity is always closely connected with infidelity, is too certain to be fairly contradicted. Even *brethren* are warned of an
evil

^u See the preceding section.

^w See the Table of Contents; the last article of which is, *On natural and moral ability.*

evil heart of unbelief. But are unbelief and misbelief, in all respects, the same? Depravity is concerned in both ; but are those causes which Mr. Fuller has mentioned the *sole* obstruction? Belief of the truth, in matters of the greatest consequence, frequently requires that attention to facts, that self-possession, that recollection of leading principles, and sometimes that perception of the probable issue of some uncommon events, which will not suffer us to say to tempted disciples, *It is only owing to the vilest tempers ye are not confirmed believers.* He who *knoweth our frame, remembereth we are but dust.* He distinguishes between the *feeble* and the *perfidious*. Between Judas, when he said to the chief priests, *What will ye give me, and I will deliver him to you?* and Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, when they began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. To the first, he said, *That thou doest, do quickly.* To the latter, he said, *Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.* He graciously added, *The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Such gentleness, such winning goodness, wisely applied, has a much greater tendency to promote the kingdom of God, than the evident want of such a disposition. Jacob said to Esau, *My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should over drive them one day, all the flock will die.* It is happy for us, that when subordinate shepherds are indolent,
we

we have a SOVEREIGN SHEPHERD who never slumbers. It is happy for us, when they are improperly severe, he can distinguish *between cattle and cattle*. Between the wanton, the wilful, and the weak. He is *the good shepherd of the sheep*. As such, *He shall feed his flock. He shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

II. Perhaps, Mr. Fuller does not sufficiently recollect, that, in human actions, *what seems to be the reverse of doing wrong, is not always doing what is right*. Avarice and prodigality, ambition and an abject state of the mind, breaking the law of God, and keeping it perfectly, are supposed, by some, to be in the strongest state of opposition. But if the avaricious were to be prodigal, and the mean to become ambitious, this would be only changing one vice for another. If the transgressor of the law attempted to keep it perfectly, he must, by that attempt, entertain a false idea of the perfection of the law. For, in whatever part it is *broken*, it is broken for ever; and can never be made *whole* by him who has offended in any one point. If *unbelief*, in every view of it, be as criminal as our authour has supposed, does it therefore follow that *belief* is the *immediate* duty of a depraved creature? Is spiritual perception in our power, or is it properly to be denominated a duty? Is there any real danger that
faith.

faith will be treated with *contempt*, or *neglect*, under the present dispensation of mercy and truth to sinful men, if it should be represented as *the gift of God*, and proved, that salvation is of *faith*, that it might be by *grace*? That we may believe any proposition concerning Jesus Christ, who that understands the nature of a proposition, can ever doubt? That we should use our utmost *efforts* to perceive the meaning of those propositions, and to embrace the truth which they contain, is equally clear; because, we cannot *prove* they are unworthy our immediate and best attention, and because, we none of us know what given powers we possess, but in the *use* of those powers; nor do we know how far it will please God to crown our lawful endeavours with *success*. Should we, however, be successful in any lawful attempt, two things will be acknowledged: One is, that God inclined our hearts to occupy his own talents; and we shall own, it is by his blessing we have that *understanding*, which is connected with *sound* belief, and with humble expectation.

III. Of the Almighty it is said, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*. Shall this great fact, though but imperfectly understood, give way to the ingenuity of human invention? But if our *Being*, *Motion*, and *Life*, are *from* God, and *in* him, we, in our highest state, can be nothing more than *occupants* of his favour.

The condition of a creature, even in heaven, will never admit of greater elevation.—Whatsoever we gain is by the *use* of what we *have*, and by entreating the continued assistance, and blessing, of him who has said, *Occupy till I come*. The *neglect*, or *perversion* of any faculty, or opportunity we possess, is *criminal*. The consequences of such criminality are our *own*. Nor can any thing but that mercy which is supernatural, prevent the connection between such folly, and our final ruin. Notwithstanding this, the *reproduction* of any thing we have lost, (suppose it to be our *memory*, or our *affection*,) however it may be essential to our *present* happiness, or to our *future* felicity, this is most undoubtedly of God, and it is absolutely at his pleasure to grant it, or to give us up to *imbecility* and to *vile affections*.—Some have been evidently so given up of God, as to be left, by their fellow men, without further means of instruction, Acts xiii. 46. Others have *so* sinned, that even *prayer* for their recovery, has been forbidden. 1 John v. 16. Were these things more maturely considered, the œconomy under which we are permitted a little longer to live, would be better understood. Holiness would appear to be what it is, a *favour*; and we should appear to be what we are, creatures without excuse on account of *sin*, and yet daily multiplying transgression by our *sloth*, or by our *presumption*.
For,

For, either we spend a great part of our lives in criminal inaction, or starting from the shameful situation of *non-endeavour*, we seem determined to pass beyond the region of *creatures*, and to be something of our own making; under a *notion* that this is our *duty*, and that we have too long delayed the mighty task. The intelligent, if unprejudiced, will lament such impropriety. Lament it, on a consciousness of their own folly, with painful reflection. Our authour's arguments open a wide door for the *second* extreme. It is not only the *reproduction* of what we once *had*, which he contends it is our duty to *regain*, but the *existence* of that which men of understanding suppose we *never had*, nor can have, but in a way of sovereign favour, that Mr. Fuller supposes it is the duty of every man, who has the gospel, to *produce* and *possess*: the *man himself*, by an *act* of *his own*, *unassisted*, and *prior* to his *regeneration*!

V. On Addresses to Sinners.

That sinners, impenitent and inconsiderate, should be instructed, that the gospel should be preached to them with argument, boldness, meekness, patience and prudence, is not meant to be contested. But, always to know who are impenitent, to distinguish between the classes of

these unhappy men, and to know how to address each with propriety, where is the *academy* that will teach us these lessons? where is the *man* who never errs in his best attempts to discharge this duty?

In *public teaching*, who can be certain that the *young man* who entered into the assembly *void of understanding*, intending, in the thoughtless gaiety of his heart, to do he knew not what, may not, in a few minutes, become an attentive hearer? Some object may strike, some sentence may touch, some reflection may compose his mind, beyond human expectation. While, a stated hearer, reputable and constant as any that attends, is perhaps, ruffled in his temper, vexed with some trifle, or under the influence of some astonishing, or some extravagant temptation.—The associations of thought, the impressions of the heart, the labour of some under each, and the levity of others, under the same, or different emotions, are beyond description. The varied scenes of real life, are perpetually shifting. Godwin Sands are always called by the same name, though they are not a single hour, in every respect, in the same situation.

From this glance, at a public assembly, open to all comers, what self-possession, circumspection, and fortitude, are needful to support a public Speaker! What attention, both to his audience, and his argument, at the same time, is he obliged to give! Respectful and yet undaunted; bold yet

yet cautious; conscious of his call to speak, conscious of his fair intention, and of his inability to insure success, a good Speaker rises up to address mankind. But *who is sufficient for these things?*

In *private* and personal instruction the difficulty is not, in every view, so great. The object is supposed to be known in the outlines of his character, or at least, he means to give his minister such information. Yet, it is impossible to determine, in some cases of conscience, whether you have a *fair* view of the question; a *full* one cannot be expected. When instead of freedom there is reserve, tinged with timidity, or with art, or perhaps, with temper not according with the case, what settled judgment can be formed?—Such reflections may convince us, that if mankind are not to be edified on general principles of knowledge and prudence, it is certain one man must often be unqualified to instruct another; for, it is but *in part* the most curious can expect to know of any character beside his own.—Curiosity is a potent, but dangerous principle of action. The *kinds* are various, and the *motives* leading to it are many. This, however, is clear, that whatsoever is contrary to *reason*, cannot be under the dominion of a *better* principle.

On the whole, suppose we were confident, that the object before us was unconverted, and in the bonds of iniquity; would it best become a

minister of the gospel to say, *Break those bonds?* Or to say, *Pray God, if so be the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee?* To add, *Ye must be born again*, if ye inherit the kingdom of heaven; or to urge, *Be born again*; for this is your duty?—Should it be replied, that when our Lord talked with *Nicodemus*, he did not speak *hypothetically*, but positively said, *Ye must be born again*. This objection admits of a double answer. It is the meaning of what our Lord said to *Nicodemus*, or to any other person, which demands our attention, and is worthy of it. Besides, when our Lord conversed with that cautious member of the Jewish *Sanhedrim*, he had a certain and complete knowledge of this Ruler's *condition*, and of his own *purpose* in his favour. What preacher can pretend to such knowledge of any object? What preacher would dare to think there is any *effective* connection between his purpose and the conversion of a sinner?—Where we cannot be *certain*, we must be contented with *probability*. From probability, in all its degrees, down to mere *conjecture*, we must endeavour to accommodate ourselves to *fact*, and speak, either as we know, or believe, of men and things. Such a disposition would often lead us to speak with *caution*, where we are apt to be *dogmatical*; and it would, in its extended consequences, lead us to be *firm*, where we sometimes feel the want of confidence.

Inattention

Inattention to the shifting scenes of the human mind from pain and pleasure, loss and gain, levity and langour, hope and fear; the suggestions of Satan and the whims of a fickle *heart*, (connected possibly, with an unstable, uncultivated *understanding*, and with other indescribable freaks and follies that enter into the heterogeneous composition of mankind,) is very detrimental to a public Teacher. To surmount such *indolence*, and *wisely* to direct our best attention, are *difficult*. That we may avoid the tedious task many *systems* have been formed, and *common places*, and compendious *schemes* have been invented to answer all questions; or rather to compel every thing to yield to their construction.

He who alarms at random, or more than is meet, discovers want of prudence; but can that which is unwise be any honour to us, or to the cause we wish to plead? To say, * that no sort of hope is held out in all the book of God to any sinner, as such considered, is a strange saying. To say the gospel holds out its golden sceptre to a penitent, and to him *only*, may lead some men into such mistaken conclusions about the grace of God, as may not be easy for them either to resist, or to overcome. To add, that though no sort of hope is held out, no golden sceptre stretched forth towards sinners as such, in all the book of God,

it is nevertheless, their duty *so* to repent and believe, that their repentance and faith shall be saving, is to publish terrible tidings. To assert, that if sinners, as such, do not *so* repent and believe, they draw down on themselves, for *such* disobedience, the most tremendous punishment, is to say something which is as absurd, as it is anti-evangelical.—It cannot be Mr. Fuller's intention to alarm and insult any man at the same time: Yet, what other conclusion can be drawn from some of his assertions, is very difficult to discover.—If a false conclusion be made against our authour in these, or in any other partial quotation from him, he may be assured it was owing to a bad judgment, and not the result of unfair intention. If he cannot be of that opinion, he is welcome to try what fruit a different opinion may produce. For all that can be added is, that though his *words* should not always be quoted so fully, or so exactly, as some perhaps expected, it is thought no instance will be found in which Mr. Fuller's *meaning* has been designedly perverted in this dispute.

It is easy to perceive Mr. Fuller is zealous to promote that sort of piety which he approves; and anxious that what he is pleased to call the gospel, may not be abused. It is the *penitent* our authour attempts, in a round about way, to comfort. Nor is there any doubt with us, that penitents

penitents are, in some respects, the objects of peculiar consolation. But what if the glad tidings of the gospel should be as essential to produce repentance unto life, as to comfort those that mourn? May not the same joyful sound be considered as *the word of life*, and as the support of the living? *Hear, and your soul shall live. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* These, and other declarations of grace and truth are yet with us; and open to every reader. Now, if spiritual life itself, as well as sanctification and growth in grace, are enjoyed by the medium of such declarations, what other tidings are the condemned to hear that they may *live*, or the fainting followers of our Lord to hear that they may be *revived*? What truth but that which *vivifies* can sanctify the unclean; or what beside the gospel can make *us* willing to serve the living God?

The leading error of Mr. Fuller, and of many more, on moral subjects, seems to be this, a *misapprehension of the CONDITION of a CREATURE*. If any kind of labour is possible, or even ought to

be possible to any creature, angel or man, in a state of innocence, or as depraved, which is absolutely different from ENDEAVOUR, and really short of acting EFFICIENTLY, Mr. Fuller is bound to say what it is, if he possibly can. His own honour and a due regard to the happiness of many of his readers, demand this discovery, if he has made it, to be published. Till this be done, without equivocation, he may *write*, but it is supposed he can never write an *answer* to the governing propositions of this performance.

Since these Thoughts were arranged in the manner they now are, in a course of reading, on subjects of some affinity with the present, among the rest, the following sentiments occurred.

“ *To endeavour may fitly express the use of all the opportunities and powers, that any intelligent and active, but imperfect, being hath to act. For to endeavour is to do what we can: and this, as every such being may do, where ever he stands in the scale of imperfects, so none can do more. One may exert his endeavours with greater advantage, or success, than another; yet still they are but ENDEAVOURS.*”

It is remarkable, that Mr. Fuller should sometimes not only be constrained to make a similar conclusion in his own defence, (lest he should be thought, in his zeal, to propagate ideas of duty, which

Wollaston's Relig. Nat. Delin. 7th Edit. P. 110.

which do dishonour to the Spirit of God,) but that he should quote a sentiment so like the preceding with approbation, and yet continually overlook, or contradict, his own conclusion.

From Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Fuller has produced ² the following passage: “ God requires
 “ men’s *endeavours* to this very purpose, that men
 “ may see their *inability*, which is a great lesson
 “ that furthers faith. Nature will and doth think
 “ *it can believe and repent till it makes a trial*; and
 “ as we used to put *conceited* persons upon services
 “ to shew their *folly*, and their *weakness*, upon
 “ trial, *so God deals with us.*”—If our authour be
 of that opinion, who can account for his inconsistent
 behaviour? Is it a likely way to humble the
conceited by concurring with those deep-rooted
 prejudices, common to them all, so as to indulge
 their vain imaginations of their own undoubted
ability? Will it give them a lower apprehension
 of it, to assert they are *able*, if they be but
 thoroughly *willing*, to *fulfil* the moral law?—The
 design of ¹ Dr. Goodwin in his fourth book
 of justifying faith, is both evident and consistent.
 He says, “ Men, if they saw not their own inabi-
 “ lity, would be apt to say in their hearts—My
 “ power, and the might of my hand, hath done
 “ this; (Deut. viii. 17.) and they would not see
 “ their disability, but by attempting to do some-
 G 6 “ thing.”

² P. 161.

¹ See his works, Vol. IV. B. IV. P. 83. 84.

“ thing.” The Doctor adds, “ God hath ap-
 “ pointed our *endeavours* and *means* to be used,
 “ not as duties *only*, but as testimonies and
 “ evidences that we do *wholly* depend on God to
 “ work all our works in us, and for us; seeing
 “ in the use of means, and *endeavours* of ours,
 “ God useth to come. *Carleffness* giveth over the
 “ use of the means, but when a man dependeth
 “ upon God for a thing, that dependence will
 “ make him use those means whereby to attain
 “ it, as a *testimony* he doth depend upon God; and so
 “ God requires it.—Even for this *reason* doth God
 “ require us to *endeavour*, though he himself works
 “ all, that when our *endeavours* without him have
 “ proved unsuccessful, his power in working
 “ faith at last, might appear the more.”—This
 great man, though not always to be followed,
 clearly saw that our lawful *endeavours* did not,
 at any time, exclude the power of God, and as
 clearly saw that Divine power did not annihilate
 human action. He saw, that though God doth
 not work faith in men for their *endeavours*, as the
 moving cause,—nor by them, as *adjuvant*, or
 assistant causes, that reach the *effect*, yet as con-
 comitant instruments, God operates with human
endeavours. The doctor therefore, concluded,
 (as all men, who have no fanciful system of their
 own to support, must be compelled to conclude,)
That neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he
that watereth: but GOD that giveth the increase.
 Nor is this conclusion, as he justly observed, to
 be

be given up, because it is said, *We are labourers together with God.*

A writer of a very different * description from Dr. Goodwin, speaking of the Deity, in a manner, more of the pagan, or philosophical cast, than is, (as some suppose,) to his honour, has however, been pleased to say of the Almighty, "He is the *power* " by which we act, the *intelligence* by which we " understand, and the *time* and *place* in which we " live and move and have our beings."—But if this be admitted, what are we? Being what we really are, what, beside a proper occupation of every good and perfect gift which God has been pleased to bestow upon us, and *prayer* for that blessing which he has promised to grant—what beyond all this, can be properly called our duty? Thus occupied, we could neither be idle, nor insolent. Thus occupied, the favour of God would be the perpetual spring of our endeavour; and knowing that to endeavour was our *utmost*, we should, in every lawful effort, think much more of *divine energy* than of *our own actions*. In common, alas! the reverse of this appears. But *success* in this connection, would lead us to adore and exalt the Lord alone. *Disappointment* would be borne with patience. In short, thus acting, we should find our *proper* place, and *with that*, as much felicity as the nature of things will, at present, allow.

VI. On

• Doctor Price.

VI. *On the Love of God.*

The advances which Mr. Fuller has made in favour of what is commonly called disinterested love, with some of the consequences attending that romantic idea, has been repeatedly noticed in the course of this work. Whether our authour has *erred* on this subject, and whether after all, he has, or can have, any view of the *Divine* excellence but that which is *relative*, are now to be considered. Perhaps, on this article, the following observations may be worth the reader's attention.

I. Whoever loves God, in heaven or on earth, must be a *creature*. He, therefore, who loves God is indebted to him for his *all*: His being, well being, and preservation of both. Would it not be *madness* for such a creature, without our excepting any, to profess to love God with *disinterested* affection? What pleasure can ANGELS or men possess, or be in prospect of, which is to them *indifferent*? They may prefer one pleasure to another, their reputation to their rest, their honour to their ease, but are they ever inclined, induced, or commanded, to prefer without judgment, or to judge, that their *best* interest and *duty*, their greatest possible pleasure and obedience to the will of God, can ever be divorced? What praise can *Gabriel* give his GOD, and not be thankful

thankful for the occasion? Every opening view of his MAKER's wisdom, goodness and grace, is as really his gain, as it is a new display of his CREATOR's power and glory. When CHRIST was seen of ANGELS, he became the subject of their song. Was that song the less *sublime* because it augmented their *felicity*? Is it possible for any creature to *admire* what is supremely admirable and yet to remain unconscious of *advantage*?

II. If *we* love God, we do it, not only as creatures, but as being in those circumstances which should make the fact very affecting. Are we not surrounded with innumerable classes of animals which, in the scale of creation, are thrown so far back as to be absolutely unable to know their Maker? But what is still more affecting is, the multitude among our own species, lettered as well as illiterate, who either know but very little of the true character of God, or who evidently do not like to retain it in their knowledge. Does not this remind us of our former condition, and of our recent change? Of the grace by which it was effected, and of the end of such distinguishing favour? May we not say, *What is any man, that God should magnify him? and that God should set his heart upon him?* ^b *He calleth things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his*

^b 1 Cor. I, 29, 31.

his presence. Shall such creatures whose love is the effect of favour, who have been unexpectedly conquered by compassion, who must yet perish if they *look not for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*—shall such creatures swell with the vain imagination of loving God without a direct view to their *own advantage*? Shall such shadows of being affect to treat their fellows as *mercenary* and *mean*, because they dare not extol their extravagant pretensions?—Could angels blush, the follies of the pious would give them great occasion.—Some have so admired their own reveries on the love of God, that one would imagine, as the *fit* prevailed, they could almost wish to divest themselves of *being*, and altogether of dependence on God, in order to *enjoy* the most refined affection.—Hold, it will be said, this is not only impossible, but absurd. It is so: and what else is the *chimera* of disinterested love? In religion, it is something worse than *fantastick*. To suppose it possible for any man to perceive the highest excellence so as to prefer it and enjoy it, and to fancy that such affection may be separated from his *best* interest and *highest* pleasure, he who can do this, if he has any talent for composition, is qualified to write a *romance* which, *Don Quixote* himself, was he living, would be astonished to read.—Two shocking inconveniences attend these extravagant pretensions. One

is, the probability, of being thought *hypocritical*. The other is, the danger of indulging *pride*.

III. Our love to God is either the source of corresponding action, however that action may be obstructed, or it is not. If it be not, was it ever the subject of this promise, *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart—to love the Lord thy God—that thou mayest live?* If such favour be the source of *life* at any time, is it not so, in the same sense, at all times? But can that life be thought of with *indifference*, or be enjoyed without *gratitude*?—Is it not the nature of love to operate with ardour? *Giving, transforming, uniting, subjecting*, these, says ^b Mr. Shaw, are four famous properties of love; which he thus explains: “to give away the mind to the “object, to assimilate to it, to unite it, and “to subject it thereunto.”—Can there be such effects without affection, or such affection for God, without advantage? Paul thought of this in his rudest conflicts. *If, said he, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, WHAT ADVANTAGE IT ME if the dead rise not?* He encouraged others to be *stedfast and unmoveable* on the same principle. *Always abounding*, said the Apostle, *in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye KNOW that your labour is not in vain in the LORD.*—When God is the object of
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^b Shaw's True Christians Test, P. 364.

our esteem, do they give him the greatest glory who admire him as a *Virtuoso* admires a fine piece of painting, or they who *worship him in spirit and in truth*? Who, while they feel the Spirit of Adoption to prevail, are compelled to say, *Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* This may be thought, and often has been called, *Selfish* affection: but when the *Virtuoso* is tempted by distress, to sell his fine *picture*, or his finished *bust*, for bread, who, or what shall separate a believer from the love of Christ? Of the Redeemer's love to him, and of his love to his Redeemer, it may be said, *Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it.* In short, the believer always has ground for the most pleasing conclusion that ever was formed, and sometimes has strength to say, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

IV. After all Mr. Fuller has been pleased to write of what he chooses to call the *native excellence of God*, and of what he thinks *God is*, IN HIMSELF, has he any *idea* of such excellence and greatness? Our authour has often seen the *Sun*; but does he know what the *Sun is*, IN HIMSELF?

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The more he reflects on the question the less will he be inclined to appear dogmatical. Does he know what a blade of grass is, *in itself*, or even a single grain of sand? Let him read and reverence the following forms of speech.—
Canst THOU, by searching, find out GOD? Canst THOU, by searching, find out the ALMIGHTY to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst THOU do? Deeper than hell, what canst THOU know? There is no searching of his understanding. SECRET things belong unto the LORD OUR GOD: but those things which are REVEALED belong unto US. We know in PART, and we prophesy in PART. Now we see through a glass, DARKLY. Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, INTRUDING into those things which he has NOT SEEN. GOD dwelleth in the light which no man CAN approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or CAN SEE. No man hath seen God at any time. The Only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of his Father, he hath declared him.—HEAR YE HIM!—
 Who that reveres these sacred forms of expression, will expect to know God, so as to hope in his mercy, without the medium of *revelation*? Or expect that the scriptures should *make us wise to salvation, without faith which is in, and also from, Christ Jesus*? But what do the Scriptures teach us of God which does not relate to *creation, providence, redemption, or condemnation*? What in-
 formation

formation does the scripture give us of the divine perfections, even in this *relative* view, which is not so communicated, and which must not so be received, as led *one* Apostle to say, *Now we see through a glass, darkly; and another* to compare even the prophetic word, *unto a light which shineth in a dark place?*

It has been held, with that appearance of argument that invites inspection, “*That we are so far from having clear and distinct ideas of those things of another world which are revealed to us, that we have no proper or immediate idea of them at all.*” By “*a proper and immediate idea,*” the learned authour means, “*a conception or notion of the thing as it is in ITSELF.*” By “*a mediate, or improper idea,*” he means, “*a notion we form of any thing in our minds by ANALOGY, or SIMILITUDE.*” He thinks this distinction “*a very necessary one, and of excellent use to set the bounds and measures to our knowledge, and to lay open the true nature of our christian faith: that we may clearly apprehend where knowledge ends, and faith proceeds alone.*”—If Mr. Fuller be unwilling to approve of this remark, he may try his strength with the following propositions: *God is a Spirit. God is infinite. God is omnipresent. Known unto God*

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“ See a Letter in Answer to a book entitled Christianity not Mysterious, by Peter Browne, B. D. Senior Fellow of Trin. Coll. Dublin, 3d Edit. P. 30—38.

are all his works from the beginning of the world. God is glorious in holiness. He is the Rock: His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. If Mr. Fuller can explain these propositions, without making some *representation* of the things contained in them, by compounding and enlarging those ideas we have either of *sensible* objects, or from the operations of our own minds, he shall be *applauded* for his pains. But should he fail in this difficult attempt, let him recollect, That *analogy* expresseth nothing of the *real* nature of that incomprehensible Being whose name is I AM; nor does it give us the least glimpse of him, as he is in HIMSELF.

The preceding remarks will be liable to two objections. They will be thought to contain a defective and vicious account of our love to God. *Defective*, because it is supposed to originate from a very *imperfect* view of the object beloved, through mediums that obscure his glory, and is limited to such narrow bounds, that men of genius, of stronger thought, and purer emotions, will be unwilling to approve.—There is no more weight in this objection, in point of argument, than there is piety in the disposition of him who would choose to support it. We are always obliged to see the *Sun* through the *Atmosphere*. Whether we look at him by the naked eye, or with

with a telescope ; whether we view that splendid body in spring or autumn, in summer or winter, of necessity, it is still the same. Is this to be lamented? Not at all. Let us be thankful. For, were the *Atmosphere* removed, and our faculties unaltered, we who *now* admire, should then be confounded; we who enjoy the extended splendour of the Sun, should then perceive a tremendous change.—God is that glorious Being, who is *fearful in praises*. Seraphs cover their faces while they attempt to praise HIM. Their impotence to *reach*, or *approach* the subject of their solemn song, adds to their happiness. — What son would repine at the immensity of his father's *greatness*, provided it had no tendency to lessen his *kindness*? “ For it is less desirable to be
“ *able* to describe the power and excellencies of
“ him we have an *interest* in, than to have an
“ interest in one whose power and goodness
“ *exceeds* whatever we can say or fancy of them.”

But still it will be urged, that this account of our love to God is as *vicious* as it is *defective*. It will be represented as *mercenary*, and as ever keeping our interest in view.—Does not this objection originate from *pride*? “ It grieves us
“ sensibly, said the honourable ^e Mr. BOYLE,
“ to see ourselves reduced to be only *passive*, and
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^a Rowning's Philosophy, Part IV. P. 120.

^e Boyle. ^f See his *Motives and Incentives to the love of God*, P. 92, 93. 8th Edit.

“ the *receivers* in this commerce. We would
 “ fain contribute something, and cannot always
 “ refrain from devoting our wishes to increase his
 “ happiness to whom we owe all ours.” Some
 of those extravagant wishes which discover irregular affection and unripe reason, this authour has mentioned. He has also said, “ That many
 “ applauded *preachers* have, of late, been pleased
 “ to teach the people that to hope for heaven
 “ is a *mercenary, legal, and therefore, unfilial affection.*” To this objection, however, he replies : “ ^z Indeed, to hope for heaven *as wages*
 “ *for work performed, or by way of merit,—were*
 “ *a presumption to which none of the divines we*
 “ *dissent from, can be too much an enemy :*” he adds, “ nor perhaps, more so than I am.” But then this honourable authour contends, that to take in God’s blessing among the motives of loving God, is but to do as they have done who have ever loved him best. In proof of this, he produces many apposite portions of scripture ; and he might have added, without any painful search, as many more.

Philosophers, as well as *preachers*, have, some of them, taught the possibility, and excellence of disinterested affection. Probably, as *Paul* was deserted, and *Plato* consulted, such refinements prevailed. And now, as some modern philosopher,

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or some philosophic Professor of christianity is admired, (and of course, the Old Testament, and the New, but slightly surveyed) singular refinements are attempted.—The late ^b Mr. DAVID HUME admits, that “ the deduction of morals from
 “ self-love, or a regard to private interest, is an
 “ obvious thought, and has not arisen wholly
 “ from the wanton fallies and sportive assaults
 “ of the sceptics.” Nevertheless, Mr. HUME thought it was easy to oppose what he is pleased to call, *the selfish theory*. He argues thus; “ We
 “ frequently bestow praise on virtuous actions,
 “ performed in very distant ages and remote
 “ countries; where the utmost subtilty of imagination would not discover any appearance of
 “ self-interest, or find any connection of our
 “ present happiness and security with events so
 “ widely separated from us.”

After having brought this matter to “ what
 “ natural philosophers, after lord BACON, have
 “ affected to call the *experimentum crucis*,” he thus concludes, “ We must renounce the theory which
 “ accounts for every moral sentiment by the
 “ principle of *self-love*. We must adopt a more
 “ *public affection*.”

From this account, one thing, at least, is obvious; that *religious* dispositions are not essential to the renunciation of what is called *the selfish theory*:

^b See his Essays, new Edit. Octavo. Vol. II. P. 264.

theory: for HUME, though not the most honest man that ever lived, was too honest to treat all religion as *superstition*, and to wish posterity to imagine that he was *superstitious*.—Those sentiments which some *deists* admire, and which men who are *atheistically* inclined extol, should be received, if received at all, with circumspection. If we are compelled to receive what is thus recommended, is there any ground to imagine that what is thus received is of uncommon value?

To Mr. Hume's argument, it may be replied, That we never cordially bestow *praise* without being *pleased*. Nor are we pleased with the report of virtuous actions, unless we *judge* them to be such. Nor do we *so* judge, without *applauding* ourselves for our decision. For we really think it contributes to advance our "present happiness" and security," by increasing our *reputation*. Nor does it fail of producing this effect, because the report of those virtuous actions which excited our praise, was of actions "performed in very distant" ages and remote countries;" such reports are sometimes more affecting and instructing to us, than moral actions, of an inferiour kind, done but yesterday, and under our own inspection.

All men love pleasure and applause, and never rationally renounce either, but in hope of superiour gratification, and of superiour praise; or as a *mean* leading to such enjoyment. The reverse of this behaviour, except it be in some

*capricious, or delirious moment, need never be expected. Of pleasure and applause our taste may widely differ. Still, we are steady in those pursuits. Why did Mr. HUME write his ESSAYS and his HISTORY? Either pleasure moved him to write, or in quest of it he wrote. He panted for fame and obtained the prize. Who can write against him, but from the same general motives? Dr. REID felt the force of these motives in guarding society against the dangerous paradoxes which Mr. HUME's sceptical temper produced; and, for so doing, it is confessed, he has obtained deserved applause. Mr. TOPLADY was induced, on similar grounds, to oppose the Arminian tenets of Dr. REID; and, though he has done it harshly, he fought in that attempt, what is always fought, in every conscientious controversy, namely, his own reputation. Mr. Fuller fought it when he wrote his TREATISE; and in this censure of that performance, however deceived, the writer of these Thoughts never intended, by exposing them to public notice, to diminish his own *repute*. He ever wishes to regard the following exhortation: *Whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT; if there be any VIRTUE, and if there be any PRAISE, think on THESE THINGS.**

To some men, mental pleasures are by much preferred. Of that kind are historical deduction
and

and biographical description. HUME has excelled in both. He has set distant ages, and actions done in remote countries, before his readers. We have observed it, with different emotions. Never with a view to make ourselves miserable. Never so as to be in no respect, either the better or the worse for a diligent attention to the pleasing, instructing, delusive and dangerous effusions of his pen.—On the subject before us, it was unworthy of this philosopher to suppose, that when we are pressed with some of those arguments he has produced against what he is pleased to call the *selfish theory*, we should be compelled to say, “That we transport ourselves, by the force of
“imagination, into distant ages and countries,
“and consider the advantage, which we should
“have reaped from these characters, had we been
“contemporaries, and had any commerce with
“the persons.”—There is no need of such deception. The preceding remarks may possibly, be allowed to vouch for the truth of that assertion.

If it was unworthy Mr. HUME to form such an objection, it is still more unbecoming a *christian* to follow him in this business. Christians profess to live and walk by faith. What was done “in
“very distant ages and remote countries,” is, in its true report, considered by them as *glad tidings*. Tidings which they cannot hear with indifference, which they cannot believe without affection, which they cannot esteem without advantage,

which they cannot regard without gratitude. A christian, therefore, may easily find out that connection which Mr. HUME supposed “ the utmost “ subtilty of imagination would not discover.”

But those things which have contributed to raise a clamour against that kind of love to God and man which is here defended, will still prevail. For who of us, can bear to be thought *selfish*? That frightful word is enough to alarm a *hypocrite*, for it sometimes alarms too many of fair intention.—After all, *what is self*? If by *that*, you mean *concupiscence, appetite, whim*, or any thing *disreputable*, to be *selfish* is to be *abominable*. Are we thus contending for any thing *selfish* in our love of God or man? Far from it. Many have recollected these words of St. Paul, *What I hate, that do I*; who have not properly recollected the following: *It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*. This distinction between SELF and SELF, or between what is laudably, and criminally so called, would be of daily service. Could this be made accurately, we should perceive, that we might love God, our NEIGHBOUR and OURSELVES, at the same time. Nay, we should perceive whatever deserves the name of love is always thus connected. We should also discover, that what is sometimes called *self-love*, is neither a *social*, nor a *sacred* affection: but something which is, in every view, unworthy of such an appellation.

It has been held, that there is a *self* in every *state*, and in every *church*. It has been said, *The state must take care of ITSELF. The church must take care of ITSELF.* These sayings have not always conveyed the most pleasing ideas. Originally, however, *THAT in the constitution of each, which was thought to be most EXCELLENT,* seems to have been intended. Now, in *individuals*, as well as in *collective bodies*, we are thus to judge of *self*. A man's self is properly said to be *THAT* which, in the nature of man, is the *most excellent*; that is to say, *HIS MIND*. In this view, which is a fair one, should not every man love *himself*; that is, desire to *polish*, and *purify* his *mind*, and so to treat his *body*, as far as in him lies, as may be conducive to it's advantage? Are not the most evangelical promises granted us to produce peace of conscience, and purity of intention? Without these, have we, or can we have, fixed desires to glorify God? Let us be thankful that *the faith of God's Elect*¹ completes the noblest instinct in man; which is, a thirst after *happiness*. All men would be happy, but none are so who do not believe in *JESUS CHRIST*. The believer's happiness, indeed, is dashed with tribulation; but it is the *earnest* of uninterrupted and unfading felicity. Shall we be *ashamed* to seek such happiness, or, so employed, shall we *affect* to be disinterested in the grand pursuit?

VII. *On Humility.*

So much has been said, in a former section, of Mr. Fuller's notion of humility, as may excuse, if it does not justify, the omission of additional remarks. Those thoughts were indulged and written with this belief, That *genuine* humility is peculiar to the christian religion: or, that the facts which christians believe, alone produce that disposition which may be *truly* called lowliness of mind. This humility is founded on a settled persuasion of the excellence of the Divine character, so far as it is exhibited to us in the word of truth. Humility, in this connection, is not *painful* to the possessor. On the contrary, the humble wish to augment it, and to keep it free from affectation. This lowliness of mind does not degenerate into meanness; nor does it produce those improprieties of expression, which have been already so freely censured and exposed. They who think there is not any disposition in us more essential to our full enjoyment of the gospel than humility, will read, with some attention, what has been submitted to their judgment on that temper which all profess to *esteem*, but which so few, in any eminent degree, seem to *possess*.—May no altercation on this subject make us liable to forget him who was *meek and lowly in heart*; or that he has said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of God!*

AT the close of this section, it may be proper to consider what *induced* Mr. Fuller to *renounce* some of those sentiments which he once embraced, to *publish* others, and *defend* his change of opinion. It would, indeed, be dangerous to venture on the borders of *conjecture* on this subject; but surely, it cannot be treason to inspect those reasons which Mr. Fuller himself has thrown out on this occasion. These, in *number*, are *six*. What they are in *weight*, every reader will judge for himself.

The *first* reason our authour has assigned for his recent change, is, *a suspicion that the sentiments which he has renounced were not scriptural*.

Mr. Fuller's own words are, " ^k I had formerly entertained different sentiments. For some few years, however, I began to doubt whether all my principles on these subjects were scriptural. These doubts arose chiefly from thinking on *some* passages of scripture."— It does not appear that Mr. Fuller's doubts were from *the general tenour of the scriptures*, but from *some* passages only; of which, *three* are mentioned. The *first* of the three, is the latter part of the second psalm: chiefly these words. *Kiss the Son.*

H 4

But,

^k P. iii.

But, does Mr. Fuller need to be informed, that if even Kings and Judges were to embrace the Son without wisdom, or without that persuasion that argued a spiritual understanding, it would do the MESSIAH little honour, and would do them but little good? Should, therefore, such characters, or the meanest among mankind, embrace the Son with spiritual affection, so as to *confess they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, to declare plainly, that they seek a country, they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly;* whence, it will be asked, is such a disposition? Of flesh? Of blood? Of man? Or of God? But if it be of God, *ought* it to be of any other? Be it of whom it may, must not such *power*, and the *glory* resulting from it, ever be too excellent for us?

The *second* and *third* passages of scripture which Mr. Fuller has produced, are these: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!* *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out!*—What would our authour infer from these exhortations? That the kingdom of heaven among men, *ought* to originate from the actions of the *unregenerate*, and to be *erected* on dispositions which they themselves should produce?—Are we not taught to pray thus, **THY KINGDOM COME?** As this **KINGDOM** advances, are we not taught to say to the **ALMIGHTY**, *THINE is the KINGDOM, and the POWER, and the GLORY?* But can we properly say **AMEN** to such petitions, if we suppose that something *ought* to be performed by the

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UNCONVERTED, which *should* be the *beginning* of this glorious kingdom?

In what is commonly called the Lord's prayer,
 " God himself teaches us, not to pray for a
 " mere *ability* to effect, but for the *effects them-*
 " *selves*; even that the one may *come*, and the
 " other may be *done*.—He teaches us to pray down
 " right, *That HIS KINGDOM may come, and HIS*
 " *WILL may be done*, even that these *EFFECTS*
 " *may assuredly be produced*.—These petitions are
 " like so many *canons* overthrowing and dismount-
 " ing the laws and *canons* of *free-will*. For by
 " those *laws*, we cannot pray to God for these
 " *effects*, but only for a mere *ability* toward them.
 " Having prayed for a mere ability to make the
 " *KINGDOM come, and the WILL*" of God " to
 " be done, then, if we will pray any farther,
 " for the effects themselves," according to some,
 " we must pray to our own *FREE-WILLS* for
 " them; and so put our own *FREE-WILLS* in
 " God's place:" but the impiety of such an ad-
 dress who can possibly approve? Who would not
 be alarmed, or very much offended, were he to
 hear such supplications as these, " *LORD, let*
 " *thy KINGDOM be at my pleasure, and thy WILL at*
 " *the will of my FREE-WILL, whether THAT shall*
 " *come, or THIS shall be done!*" While to their
 own *FREE-WILLS* the language is " *Let GOD'S*
 " *KINGDOM come, and HIS WILL be done!*"—

H 5

Where

¹ Rous.

Where prayer is so vicious, praise will be as foul: Praise corresponding with such supplications, is supposed by Mr. Rous to commence with the words of the *Pharisee*, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men!* and to conclude with this alteration, “ *I thank thee, O MINE OWNSELF; or O MINE OWN FREE-WILL, that I am not like other men!*”

What do you mean? some will be ready to ask. They will demand, *Does Mr. Fuller teach such doctrine? Does he ever insinuate that the unregenerate can do any thing which is really good; even so much as to think a good thought; or that they ever will?*—No; he does not. But he contends they *ought* to do THAT which should only be performed by the Spirit of grace. Nay, he thinks they *might* be the doers of every thing which he supposes they *ought* to do, if they were *willing*. So that, they who enter into the spirit of Mr. Fuller's system, and would be consistent with it, must *lament* they have not made themselves a *new heart*, and renewed within themselves a *right spirit*. Should these operations be found as *impossible*, as the very attempt so to act (on belief of our ability to perform such actions) is unlawful, the task, as this is perceived, must be given up; or else prayer must succeed to previous presumption. Should this be done with ample conviction, and acknowledgment, it would be a pleasing change. But this, those sentiments of our authour which

which are here opposed, if they are *closely* followed, will not permit. They who embrace them may pray, indeed, but they must not pray to be any thing which it was not their duty to have been before, by some natural, and unassisted efforts of their own.

Whether this *first* reason for our authour's change of his sentiments will justify his renunciation of those tenets which he has abandoned, they who are at leisure to think about it, may judge as they please. This, however, may be added: What we renounce, we are supposed to disesteem. The appearance of renouncing any thing we continue to respect, is a species of *hypocrisy* from which Mr. Fuller is supposed to be exempted. But he who disowns those sentiments which he once embraced, should be properly satisfied that his second choice may be much better defended than his former belief. If our authour has obtained such satisfaction, some of his friends cannot but wish he was better able to impart it, that it might be to them unquestionable. But this pleasure, several who esteem Mr. Fuller are obliged to say, is, at present, unexpected.

The *following* reason which is given by Mr. Fuller for his partial conversion, is thus expressed: " ^m On reading the lives and labours of such
" men as ELLIOT, BRAINERD, and several others
" who preached Christ with so much success,
H 6 " their

“ their work, like that of the apostles seemed,” says our authour, “ to be all plain before them. “ They appeared to me, to have none of the “ *shackles* with which I felt myself incumbered.”

Impatience, increased by a lust of being consequential, but disguised by such a fig-leaf as this, *an ardent desire to be useful*, has already done strange things; and the same disposition will probably still push its possessours on to wide extremes. Mr. Fuller felt himself *incumbered* with *shackles* he resolved to *break*, and with ^a *bonds* he was inclined to *burst*. He has acted accordingly; and would first alarm, and then rouse others, to follow his example. Before we follow him too far, let us endeavour to *see afar off*, and to think of the consequences of such a step. Has our authour himself, in his comparatively unshackled state, obtained unbounded freedom? Far from it. ° He still trembles while he writes: and, as Mr. TAYLOR attended to what our authour has written, he thus exclaimed: “ P Alas, “ I cried, as I read this, *the effects of being fettered “ by a system!*” More *fetters* still to break, and bonds on bonds to burst!—Were Dr. PRIESTLEY to read Mr. Taylor’s OBSERVATIONS, *Alas!* he’d cry, *the effects of being fettered by a system!* TINDAL, MANDEVILLE and HUME, were they living, would probably lament that a man of Dr. PRIESTLEY’s erudition should be so *shackled*

^a P. 167. ° DEF. P. 77. ^P OBSERV. P. 26.

shackled in the toils of *superstition*, as to prostitute his philosophical talents to convert *fanatics*.—Glancing at this unfettered tribe, Mr. Fuller seems distanced and in chains. Let him be contented. Ambition, pride, and whim, are restless things : nor is there any possibility of satisfying a wandering disposition. The most stationary *planets* are as pleasing, and as useful too, as those lawless comets of whose eccentric paths we know but little. God however, binds them fast; nor can their appearance frighten the vulgar, or amuse men of understanding, without, or beyond, his own permission.

Another reason which Mr. Fuller has assigned for his late change, is stated thus: “^a Being one
 “ day in company with a worthy minister, he
 “ suggested, that he thought we had generally
 “ had mistaken views concerning *unbelief*. Un-
 “ belief, said he, is *a calling in question the truth of*
 “ *what God has said, be that what it may*. I admired
 “ his thought, which appeared to me, to carry in it
 “ its own evidence. My thoughts began to swell
 “ pretty largely on this subject. I preached
 “ upon it more than once. From hence my
 “ mind was naturally led to think of its opposite,
 “ *faith*, and to consider *that as a hearty credit*
 “ of whatever God *hath said, be it what it may*.
 “ From hence, by an easy transition, my mind
 “ was led farther to suspect my former senti-
 “ ments

" ments concerning faith not being the duty of
 " unconverted sinners. It was natural to argue
 " after this sort—If true faith is nothing more
 " nor less than a cordial belief of what God says,
 " surely it must be every one's duty, where the
 " gospel is published, to do that. Surely no man
 " ought to question or treat with indifference
 " any thing which Jehovah hath said!"

In this story, sincerity and simplicity are conspicuous. The latter is lessened in its value, because it is not connected with proportionable understanding. As the tale is told, *suggestion, admiration, amplification, communication; inference, easy transition, suspicion of former sentiments, and arguments against them*, rush too rapidly on the reader's mind. When Mr. Fuller is aware how puerile such a change will seem to some, he will feel that shame which will make him cautious of exposing to publick view again such indigested conclusions. Such a hasty and partial view of things so important, must always issue in disappointment.—Unbelief is here represented as calling in question the truth of what God has said. But do all unbelievers take it for granted that the bible is the word of God? Yet, as if they did, our authour infers, " Surely, no man ought to
 " question, or to treat with indifference any
 " thing which Jehovah has said." But may we not repeatedly *doubt* whether we know the *meaning* of what God has said, without treating his

his words with irreverence? May we not venture to *contradict* Mr. Fuller's mistakes, without being denominated unbelievers?—What does our authour mean by *any thing which God has said*? This may seem a needless question. Yet as the same authour assures us, “ ‘ When we speak “ of the *faith of the gospel*, as a belief of the “ truth, it is not to be understood of *all kinds of “ truth*; nor even of *all kinds of scripture truth*,” such a question seems natural and not easy to be avoided. Mr. Fuller says, “ a true believer, “ *so far as he understands it, does believe all scripture truth.*” Be it so; Whence had this *true believer* his *understanding*? Are all true believers bound to have the same *degree of understanding*? Again, if true believers are to *believe*, or to be persuaded of, nothing more than they *understand*, may not the celebrated aphorism of Dr. FORSTER, *Where mystery begins religion ends*, be safely embraced? To show the *folly* of such *unripe and rash* decisions, *A LETTER in answer to a BOOK entitled CHRISTIANITY not MYSTERIOUS*, (which has been mentioned before) is well worth the reader's perusal, if the authour of these Thoughts be able to form, on this subject, a judgment deserving his notice.

An *additional* argument for Mr. Fuller's change, is a perception, in one instance, of his former credulity. He says, “ ‘ It appears to me, that

“ we

“ we had taken carnal men too much upon their
 “ word, when they told us, they believed the
 “ truth.” Mr. Fuller was now convinced they
 did not. Thus he argues: “ What constitutes
 “ the gospel, is *good news*: but what ever faith a
 “ wicked man may have in it as a piece of *news*,
 “ he hath none in the goodness of it; he is there-
 “ fore, an unbeliever in the very *essence* of the
 “ gospel, or in that without which it would not
 “ be the gospel.” Far be it from our intention
 to contend for that *belief* which is of no *advantage*
 to the *believer*. But, can any *news* be *good* which
 is not true? Is not the gospel the *word of truth*?
 Is it fair to call any man an *unbeliever*, who
 believes the truth of the gospel? Yes, it will
 be said, if he does not act consistently. Indeed!
 who is always consistent? Is our authour him-
 self? If he be, why does he so feelingly *lament*, in
 public worship, his own defects, and inconsistent
 conduct? Why are the *best* characters on earth
 thus employed? It is meet they should. Yet,
 if *hypocrisy* slide into their confessions, who is it
 that such *cant* can ever please?—We should always
 aim to be consistently *right*; but to suppose true
 believers are never inconsistent, or strangely incon-
 gruous, might be so retorted on our authour, as to
 make him renounce the shadow of such a position.

When Mr. Button urged the impropriety of
 Mr. Fuller's conclusion from the same premises,

he

he asked our authour these questions: "Do not
 "men in general, believe they shall die, yea,
 "really, cordially and heartily believe it? But
 "do they act accordingly?" Mr. Fuller replied,
 "'Death is more an object of *intuition* than faith."
 Whose death? My own? How does this ap-
 pear? According to our authour, thus; I *see*
 the death of my fellow creatures, from thence,
 I *infer*, I must die sometime; and therefore,
 I do not so much *believe* the testimony of God as
 my own inference, from repeated observation,
 and, such inference is *intuition!* or *knowledge*
 not obtained by *the deduction of reason!*—But it is
 objected, is it not to gratify the wicked to sup-
 pose they may believe many things, and yet act
 inconsistently? Not at all. They should be told
 plainly, that persuasion may be well *founded* when
 it is not *regarded*, or when seduction prevails
 against it. In such a situation, what can they
 expect from their belief? Nevertheless, whether
 faith be *dead*, being *alone*, or whether it be *tran-*
sitory, continuing but for a *season*, while it exists,
 and *as* it appears, it should be *acknowledged*. If
 any man should say, *I see the better, but the worse*
pursue, would it become us to say, that it is *false*,
 or to assert that it is *impossible*? We might, how-
 ever, be allowed to say, That if it be *predomi-*
nantly so, that such perception is of little value to its
 infatuated possessor. Paul said, *That which I*
do,

do, I allow not: for what I would, that I do not, but what I hate, that do I. Self, is here to self opposed. This fact may be thought only applicable to young christians, or to characters destitute of the grace of God. Not to dispute such an opinion at present, the authour of these Thoughts is not unwilling to confess, that such language, even to this day, is not foreign to all his feelings. He owns, he is yet obliged to say, *O wretched man that he is; and to ask, who shall deliver him from the body of this death!* Nor does this cry prevent his hope of deliverance, or the enjoyment of that grace which will never suffer sin to regain its former dominion.

The next reason urged by Mr. Fuller for a change in some of his sentiments, is thus connected with the former, “^w To this, I may add, “ I think, another cause, which contributed to “ the same end. I had read, and considered, as “ well as I could, Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS’s “ ENQUIRY into the FREEDOM of the WILL, “ with some other performances on the distinction of *natural and moral ability*.”—In this distinction, Mr. Fuller says, “he always found great pleasure.” Thinking on it, he first discovered that the *inability* of fallen men, was chiefly of the *moral* kind. Afterwards, he perceived it was *wholly so*. From this, our authour inferred, that it was *criminal*, and *punishable*; and the next inference

inference was, that *faith* and all other things, truly and *spiritually* good, are the duty of *unconverted* sinners.—What does Mr. Fuller intend? That it is the duty of the unconverted to *occupy* what is truly and *spiritually* good *in them*? No; for he affirms, that things of this description have no existence in the *unregenerate*. Does he mean, it is their duty to *produce* principles and dispositions truly and *spiritually* good? To this he answers as his temper has permitted. When severe, at least not kind, to a *creature* of his own *making*, who is supposed to say, “* What would “ you have me do? *Can I create* a principle of “ honesty in myself? or is it my duty to do so?” He replies, “ Create a principle of honesty in “ yourself?—you *villain*! whether it is your duty “ to *create* it or no, you certainly ought to *have* “ it, and you are *monster* in human shape for “ being *without* it.”—It is the perpetual fallacy of Mr. Fuller, that what is *monstrous*, and must be treated as such, should be *remedied* by the *monster*; and the *de-monstration* is, that if you deny it, you plead for *monsters*, or, by our author’s construction, you are supposed to affirm there is nothing *monstrous*.

When Mr. Fuller is in a graver temper, and not so distant from truth, what he has quoted from Dr. Goodwin is then *recollected*. But, if what has been recently produced from Mr.
Fuller

* P. 150.—151. † See above, P. 155.

Fuller, be the result of of his reading EDWARDS on the WILL, *as well as he could*, either his talents for metaphysical productions are not the most excellent, or, Mr. EDWARDS has *not* been of such use, in this instance, as might have been expected. —Coarse, rude, and even comical as our authour may seem to some, *to his self-created monster*, it is evident, he thinks his conduct on that occasion, what his opponents cannot *equal*. For Mr. Fuller says, “He that maintains it to be no man’s duty to *have* and *exercise* a principle which he has *has not*, could not thus reply;” that is, as he has done. This may be true; but whether such *censure* be not a real *compliment*, is more doubtful than our authour’s transitory triumph would permit him to consider.—The influence Mr. EDWARDS has over many pious people, and of the ground and effect of that influence, so far as it concerns the *present debate*, may be considered. In the *conclusion* of these Thoughts, if indeed, they should be continued, some respectful notice will be taken of that valuable authour.

The *last* reason which Mr. Fuller has given us for the publication of his TREATISE, is the confidence which he reposed in a *few* judicious friends. Into their hands he put his *Manuscript*. They, it seems, differed in their opinion. But we are told, ^z at the request of the *greater* part of these *few* friends, it now appears in print.

Thus

Thus encouraged, our authour *ventured* to come forth; but it was with *trembling*. He was ^a ready to indulge *despair*, to resign *all hope*, nay to *weep*. So much alarmed was Mr. Fuller at the supposed consequences of his own resolution.— Poor authours, often as *proud*, or *vain* at least, as *poor*, to what frightful apprehensions are they sometimes addicted! The book will not be *read*; it will not *sell*, it will not be *applauded*; or if it be, some rival for fame will detect my weakness, and triumph at my expence. Terrours like these have stifled many a rising thought, and suppressed that ardour which might have been, if fully indulged, *useful*, or *noxious*, to society. Some, to avoid the storm, have *ventured* without a name into the republic of letters; and others, from the same motive, have *crept* in under the patronage of a sounding name. But in *writing*, as when a man goes down to *battle*, the first onset is often the most formidable. Familiarity, even with danger, increases resolution. As to the phantoms of imagination, they operate with force only while they are kept at due *distance*, and remain, in part, *concealed*. If closely pursued, and fully investigated, or if too far off, they disappear.— As our authour went on, his courage came. He has not only faced his opposers, but, in defiance of their arguments, holds fast his own opinions. Nor is it imagined, this additional
attack,

attack, will beat him from his old ground. It may teach him however, (is it presumption to suppose it may?) that there are more places in his TREATISE open to assault than he suspected,

IT may gratify some readers, without offending others, to be informed, *why* the authour of these Thoughts engaged in this controversy. The plain answer is, *he could not help it*. If the will be moved by that which is the *strongest* motive to the agent who is moved, the fact shows, in this case, his strongest motive was to *write*; and to write what now is *written*.—Yes; but what *induced* him to write?—*His own happiness, and reputation*.—Let this be explained.—Thus then: He thought Mr. Fuller's leading propositions to be what he has represented them; *obscure, inconsistent, and erroneous*. He heard, last *January*, that, in a certain connection, our authour's sentiments were more prevalent than he had expected. He thought such a report to be lamented; and the more so, as the prevalence of those tenets, were evidently connected with *unprofitable* contention. Ruminating on these things, and some other affecting consequences
of

of the opinions here opposed, he fancied he was *qualified* to say something in answer to Mr. Fuller which would be above *contempt*, and might be of some service to the churches, and to other persons, who had been *ensnared, unsettled or vexed* with this controversy. He was confident, that a *probability* of his being the occasion of such service, would warrant his best attempt to perform it, and that this attempt would *add* something to his own *understanding*. He saw, or thought he saw, the connection between his *success* and the *glory of God*. Thus induced he could not forbear making the present effort, to convince Mr. Fuller, and his followers, that their zeal for God was probably not according to knowledge.

Was Mr. Fuller a man of questionable piety, or very remote in his sentiments from the celebrated Mr. RICHARD BAXTER, the following abridgment of a part of Mr. BAXTER's preface to his CATHOLICK THEOLOGY might give him offence. But as no doubt is entertained of the piety of our authour, or of his being willing to receive instruction from that quarter, on the subject here introduced, it was imagined the proposed abridgment might excite, as well as deserve Mr. Fuller's notice.

Mr. Baxter was of opinion that *misapprehensions of godliness* are one of the greatest causes of *contention and division*. In proof of this, he wishes his
readers

readers to *consider*, That holiness is the best thing
 in the world. That all good men prefer it before
 all other things. That it is God's interest more
 than ours. That, nevertheless, we all know but
 in part; so that, most teachers take abundance of
 things for true and good, which are false and evil,
 and for false and evil, which are true and good.
 That he who thinks any thing to be good or bad,
 duty or sin, which is not so, will be zealous in the
 pursuit of his mistake if he be serious before God.
 That they who act superstitiously, (as most good
 people do in some things, through ignorance)
 will censure others by the measure of their own
 mistakes. That he who thinks men sin when
 they do not, will have a proportionable dislike of
 them, and averſation from them. That all parties
 will be faulty, and that the greatest part of the
 CLERGY will be guilty of so much ignorance,
 pride, contentiouness, wordliness, and sensuality,
 as will greatly grieve good people. That such
 carnal CLERGY will usually hate and persecute
 godly zealous preachers. That godly people will
 run further into bitterness against the carnal per-
 secuting party, than their suffering leaders desire.
 That notwithstanding this, interest and tempta-
 tions will prevail with too many sufferers to con-
 nive at the bitterness of their people, if not to give
 it countenance. That all men have some pride,
 and *godliness* being the *best* thing, may become the
 object of pride, as well as *knowledge* and *power*;
 and

and thus many a good man hath more of pride in his profession and separation, than he perceives. That because God's word, his last judgment, and heaven and hell do make so great a difference between the godly and ungodly, too many think they must *now* make a greater difference between men, by their censures and separations, than indeed they ought. That it greatly promotes schisms, that so many good people are unacquainted with church-history, and know not how just such opinions and schisms as their own, have risen up in former ages; nor how they have miscarried and died away, and what has been the fruit of such contentions. That few men have that humble sense of their own ignorance, and badness, which would keep their suspicions and censures more at home; and would make them more compassionate to others. That very few love their neighbours as themselves, nor consider, while they hate men's sin, what is lovely in their nature. That the piety of almost all sects of christians on the earth, is already corrupted, with so many human superstitious additions, that few can escape the temptation of censuring according as they are persuaded of the existence of such evils. That the church will always have many *hypocrites*, who quiet their consciences by adhering to the *strictest* ministers and churches, instead of aiming at a mortified, holy and heavenly heart and conversation,

sation. That persecution and hatred from others, on the one hand, and the due love of the godly, on the other, tempt too many ministers to overrun their own judgments, and to follow the more censorious sort of persons further than they ought; at least by connivance; and to be *ruled* by them whom they should *rule*: And *thus*, says Mr. Baxter, DIVISIONS are occasioned even by *piety* ITSELF.

Of the value of these remarks, different judgments will be formed. It will, however, be running no great risk to say, He must be a man of uncommon excellence, or a man who is uncommonly corrupt, to whom such sensible observations on human conduct can be of no use.—Should the best judges be of opinion, that this quotation is neither impertinently nor rudely introduced, he that made it will be more than contented with their applause.

APPENDIX,

A P P E N D I X.

IT has been thought there are *two* ways by which Mr. Fuller may be *fairly* answered. Each of them has been here adopted. But as they have not been pursued *apart*, nor in *form*, but appear alone, or mixed, as the nature of the original plan would permit, it is proposed, in this APPENDIX, to give the reader a distinct view of each; so that he may, if he should be so inclined, reconsider how far either of these modes of answering Mr. Fuller deserves additional attention.

If we closely consider the nature, origin, and excellence of that spiritual life, which is essential to christianity, we shall perceive it to be *supernatural*, * *miraculous*, of GOD, and not of man. But if this *may* be affirmed of spiritual life, and if, in every respect, spiritual life *ought* to be what it is, then our authour has strangely erred, in those *inferences* which have led him to conclude, that spiritual dispositions, and spiritual acts, without excepting any, are incumbent on all men: and, it is presumed, that by keeping in view the *nature*, *origin*, and *excellence* of SPIRITUAL LIFE, his erroneous positions will be detected and overthrown.

I 2

If

* Stapferus, Institut. Theolog. Polem. Tom. I. Cap. iii. § 1343.

If we attentively consider what is the common and unchanging condition of all creatures, it will appear, *that to ENDEAVOUR is their NE PLUS ULTRA, and, that to DO any thing beyond what is, or may be included in lawful endeavours, never WAS, IS, or WILL be required of them, as matter of duty.*

—If this be true, it forms *another* ground of argument against many propositions Mr. Fuller has advanced; and for that purpose, it has been introduced into this debate.

But, let it be observed, that neither of these principles has been first assumed to answer Mr. Fuller. For, the truth is, each of them has been used, on various occasions, by the authour of these Thoughts, when as yet he had no intention of intermeddling in this dispute.—Let it also be noticed, that these two leading grounds of argument are so *separate*, that if the *latter* should fail, (though it is believed it will not,) yet, by such a loss, the *former* will still be found a formidable mode of opposition.

Of the nature, origin, and excellence of that spiritual life which is essential to christianity, the celebrated C. VITRINGA has given us a valuable ESSAY. *A concise account of that WORK will exhibit, the *first* of these two grounds of argument against Mr. Fuller with some advantage. This, therefore, shall be attempted.

For

* TRAITE DE LA VIE SPIRITUELLE, *Traduit du Latin, par M. DE LIMIERS, LL. D.* which VITRINGA saw and approved.

For more than twenty years VITRINGA thought of indulging his *hearers* with an ESSAY on PRACTICAL RELIGION. His motives to publish it do him honour. He aimed at their instruction, and wished to wipe away reproach. For, whether it be well or ill founded, men of his *Profession* have been frequently censured, as being much more addicted to *speculative* than to *practical* pursuits. His hearers, at length, were gratified; and their able *Instructor* had the pleasure to find his efforts met with their acceptance, and were attended with good success.

But this ESSAY, however useful to those for whose benefit it was composed and *read*, was soon thrown aside; and his original intention of printing it was giving up.—Conscience, not yet satisfied, awoke VITRINGA's zeal. He heard her voice, and renewed his former resolution.—But *now*, (which was no loss to *Society*), he felt himself disposed to retrench and alter his former plan. Instead, therefore, of giving us a tedious, obscure, unanimating TREATISE of the mere PRACTICE of PIETY, urged on legal motives, he gave us an ESSAY ON SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Hear his reason. “I know,” said he, “by
 “experience, that they who are but *novices* in
 “religion, who only make an external profession
 “of christianity, are less ignorant of the *duties* of
 “the evangelical law, than they are of the nature
 “and principles of that state from whence those
 “duties

“ duties originate.”—Convinced of this, he attempted, (if it may be so expressed,) “ to bring back the *streams* to their *source*, and then to draw life of life; that is to say, the living acts of true ^a virtues from the principles which produces them—which is *regeneration*.”

According to VITRINGA, the common character of rational life is, *a state of action, or of continued exercise, with knowledge and sentiment*. So that to live, in his opinion, is *to act with knowledge, in virtue of an internal principle*. From this view of the subject, it follows, that no kind of life, not even the *lowest*, can be considered as a pure accident of body; nor can it be explained by the *mechanical* movement of certain fluids, established according to certain laws; for, every kind of life supposes an IMMATERIAL CAUSE which produces it, and includes in itself its own principle from which it proceeds; and, indeed, according to that principle, (however obstructed,) *are all the operations of life*.

But as the same man may have *animal, rational and spiritual* life at the same time, (and consequently, be inclined to actions as various as the principles of each)—as life thus *varied*, and thus *combined*, may be united with different degrees of vigour, under different *dispensations*, and with different external and internal *accidents*, VITRINGA was attentive to all these variations.—On that
langour

^a 1 Pet. ii. 2.

languor and habitual *infirmity*, on those more awful *maladies* which sometimes infect spiritual life; on the *nature*, *causes*, and *symptoms* of these disorders, and on some of the best *remedies* against them, he has left us judicious observations. He has also informed us to what this life is properly *opposed*, and from what it may be *distinguished*. He has assisted us to *discover* it where it is, and taught us how to *appreciate* in ourselves, and in others, this uncommon blessing.

It is not without reason the Apostle has called this life, ^b THE LIFE OF GOD. Because, as VITRINGA observes, the *principle* of this life is a particular gift of his grace. Because *it* cannot be enjoyed otherwise than in *communion* with God. Because, in the enjoyment of this life, God influences man *immediately* by his Spirit. In fine, because *it* is formed on the *model* of the *spiritual life* of GOD. So that they who live *spiritually*, are said to be ^c *partakers of the* DIVINE NATURE.

This incomparable life in us, must have its *cause*; its *proper* and *adequate* cause. Or, if there be more causes than one, *each* must be proper and adequate in its own sphere. Shall we find these causes in the most extended compass of human duty? Ought we, in any sense, to be the real AUTHOURS of spiritual life?—VITRINGA says, the *meritorious* cause of this life, is the *obedience of the SON of GOD*. That obedience which

was

^b Eph. iv. 18. ^c 2 Pet. ii. 4.

was founded on an *eternal covenant*, and which was continued to *his death*—the death of *the cross*. He says, the *efficient* cause of this life, is *the SPIRIT of GOD*; and that every thing spiritual in us, whether it be in our *habits, affections, or actions*, depends entirely upon him—the only *AUTHOUR* and *living PRINCIPLE* of *all our spirituality*.

A life so unexpected by the carnal mind, so undesired, so certainly from above; a life of which we had neither experience nor just conception till we were converted; a life which is at present continually exposed to various disorders, and yet so imperfectly understood, who of us can fully explain?—*Effects* may lead us to *think*, and indeed to be fully *persuaded*, who is the *efficient* cause of this life; from this we may ascend in our meditations, to the *meritorious* cause of this sacred life; and from that, we may still ascend to the *impulsive* cause; but if we should be able to do this, with proper temper, the higher we ascend, the more we shall be inclined to say, *Even so, FATHER, LORD of HEAVEN and EARTH, for so it seemed good in THY SIGHT!*

But some, on this subject, may be more inquisitive than is commendable. In such a temper, they may ask, as *NICODEMUS* did, *How can these things be?* To such a question, we can do little more than repeat those words which first produced it. *The wind bloweth where it listeth,*
and

and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—If any thing can throw additional light on this profound subject, it is probable it must be obtained by a proper use of those *metaphorical* terms which are given us, by the sacred writers, to correct our confused apprehensions of this *supernatural* life.—Of these terms, VITRINGA has selected *two*; and, by so doing, (*sans blesser la pudeur*) he has imparted instruction.

One of the terms he has selected is GENERATION: And he has observed, that as this term is applied, in the scriptures, to the *new birth*, it was designed to teach us, that *spiritual* generation is an action of GOD, by which he communicates life to man; not that life which is *common* and *perishable*, but that which is life by way of *excellence*—SPIRITUAL LIFE. This life, is supposed, to carry in it the *image* and *resemblance* of THE LIFE OF HIM, by whom it is *produced*. Produced, says VITRINGA, by a kind of *spiritual* SEED, namely, *the word* of GRACE. He assures us, the LAW cannot, by its nature, be a proper mean of *regeneration*. This honour, in his opinion, is entirely confined to the GOSPEL: And we know and believe, without his assistance, the GOSPEL ONLY is that REPORT which ever was intended to be the power of God either to the present or to the future felicity of sinful men.

And

Now, reader, from such a view of this animating subject, what think you of its being the duty of all men, who have the *incorruptible seed* of the word of life, to *vivify* themselves, and, by their own unassisted efforts, to make it **EFFECTUAL** unto SALVATION?—The question is not, whether it is not the duty of every man who is favoured with the *gospel* to **STRIVE** to enter in at the *strait gate*, previous to his being able to determine whether he is *elected*, or *called*, or whether he shall be *successful*; because, *action* is here essential to *evidence*. The question is not, whether we are not always left without *excuse* when we do not make the *best* use we *can* of the knowledge we have obtained, or when we cease to do our *best* to occupy and improve those talents which the Lord has committed to our trust. The question is not, in form, whether we *are*, or whether we *can* be the **AUTHOURS** of those dispositions which are truly evangelical; for Mr. Fuller will not, in direct terms, say we are. But the question between us, seems to be this, *whether* WE OUGHT NOT to be the **AUTHOURS** of those dispositions?—Mr. Fuller says, ^d spiritual dispositions and acts, (he excludes none,) are incumbent on all men. If, by so saying, he does not mean it is the *duty* of *all men* to be the real and proper **AUTHOURS** of [such dispositions and acts, by the energy of their own *will* and *power*, he has certainly perplexed us to answer a very poor purpose. If this be his mean-

ing, does he think there *ought* to be *two* AUTHOURS of these spiritual dispositions and acts; namely, the *unregenerate*, and the HOLY GHOST?—It is said of JESUS CHRIST, that *there is none other Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we MUST be saved*. Is there any *other* SPIRIT, than the SPIRIT of CHRIST, by whom we MUST be *born again*?—The *works* of God, whether *towards* us, or *in* us, neither *have*, nor *can* have, any other AUTHOUR than HIMSELF. If they *might*, how would they bear *witness* of him, and be a proper ground of religious *worship*?—It is not in man that *walketh to direct his steps*. Is this to be *regretted*? *We cannot do the things that we would*. Is this, upon the whole, to be *lamented*?—It is true, God said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*. But what is the *sense* of those words? * Are we to understand them *literally* that man *really* resembled God as a *spiritual, immaterial, intelligent* and *free BEING*? No; it is a resemblance of pure *analogy*, like that of a shadow compared with its substance, or that resemblance of a face which may be seen in a glass.—*To whom then shall we liken God, or what likeness shall we compare unto him?*

Such is *one* of the grounds of that answer here given to Mr. Fuller. The *other* depends on the truth of this observation; *that to ENDEAVOUR is the creatures NE PLUS ULTRA; and that to DO any thing beyond what is, or may be, included in lawful endeavours, never WAS, IS, or WILL be required of them,*

them, as matter of duty.—This position Mr. Fuller will be reluctant to admit; yet to prove that this principle of argument is inadmissible, will probably be found no easy task.

Rational creatures of every description, and in every state, are in *one* respect alike. In God, all of them, LIVE, and MOVE, and have their BEING. If so, it infallibly follows, (as indeed, it is ^f asserted,) that this is OUR condition. Nor can we believe it ever *was*, or that it ever *will* be otherwise. But if so, what could even ADAM do, when crowned with glory and honour, without his MAKER and PRESERVER? His best endeavours therefore to glorify God, (as directed by him) was the LAW of his creation. *More* could not be required; *less* could not be demanded. ADAM was to occupy all he had, with gratitude for his possessions and powers, and in humble dependance on God to bless his occupation. His *best* efforts to obey the will of the Almighty, were complete conformity to that perfect law which was the rule of his obedience.—When they failed, he fell. But since that event, is it not a mistake to suppose the *best* endeavours of a *fallen* creature CAN either satisfy the *moral law*, or make the *gospel* effectual unto salvation?

The fall of ADAM corrupted human nature in its ROOT, and in its general REPRESENTATIVE. The consequences of this fall, or first offence, are
tredmendous;

^f Acts xvii. 28.

tremendous; and without an interest in that redemption which is obtained by an incorruptible price, and enjoyed by a renovation which is miraculous, the degrading and painful consequences of sin must be, to every man, *everlasting*. Adam, it is true, before his fall, could but endeavour to glorify God. Then, however, his endeavours were the offspring of knowledge; they were exerted in a state of uninterrupted friendship with his MAKER, and always successful; because, in that state, they were continually attended with his *blessing*.

When *the offence*, as St. Paul calls it, was committed, what a change did the offender feel! His nature, indeed, remained the same. Though depraved, (if mercifully kept from the horrors of *melancholly*, and from the rage of *distractiön*) he could still endeavour; and, we have seen, or think we have seen, his *nature* never allowed him to perform superiour actions. But to what shall the endeavours of our *fallen* father be directed? Innocence *fled* from him as transgression approached; or, to say the truth, *expired*. In such a situation, his ground of access was gone; his hope of acceptance departed. A train of evils rushed in impossible to be prevented. For, the consequences of guilt are, all of them, absolutely under the dominion of God. The heavens, the earth, surrounding animals, his own frame, and his own conscience too, were awfully affected.

He who was crowned with innocence, adorned with intelligence, and blessed with peace, became, at once, a dark, disordered, offending and offensive creature! Afraid of the deserved curse, but unwilling to feel its full force—flight, feeble attempts to diminish the irksome feelings of increasing shame, with that duplicity which was as silly, as it was without excuse—such bewildered actions marked his miserable condition.

And the LORD GOD called unto ADAM, and said unto him, Where art thou? Thus apprehended and detected, the most unwelcome guest appeared. *Despair* demanded entrance, nor could he forbid her horrid intention.—In that confounding moment, he heard the voice of God! A voice that did not *first* inform our guilty, despairing father, what *he ought to do*, or *only* inform him what *he had done*; no; but that gracious voice did ADAM hear which was altogether unexpected; that voice that filled his *Seducer* with confusion, and which instantly produced, in the darkest region of despondence, blisful expectation!

The report of the same redemption, by the SEED of the WOMAN, has, (thanks be to God!) often been heard, and often amply explained, since that memorable *evening*; but from that evening to this hour, the *arm of the Lord* has been so *revealed* in the saving belief of that report, or in the existence of that faith which accompanies salvation, as to make it evident, that *the excellency*

of the power ALWAYS is of God, and not, (at any time) of us.

If this account is admitted to be just, it will certainly lead us to conclusions *subversive* of many positions advanced by Mr. Fuller, and equally *subversive* of some popular notions, for vending of which, too many have obtained applause. Some evidence of the force of this *second* ground of argument has already been given; and, unless it is proved to be *inadmissible*, additional evidence of its use in this controversy may be expected; with an attempt to *answer* such objections as are thought to *deserve* attention. But, in moral reasonings, the sensible remark of Monsieur BAYLE is worth our notice. He says, " In religious disputes
 " every one is both *judge* and *party*. He who dis-
 " putes examines not the reasons of his adversary
 " after investing himself with a sceptical temper:
 " this he believes would be *criminal*. He exa-
 " mines, therefore, well persuaded that the religion
 " which he professes is the *only* true religion.
 " *Three* probabilities on the side of our *pre-occup-*
 " *ation* prevail over *ten* or *twelve* on the *other* side;
 " because, the attention of our minds is carried
 " infinitely more to probabilities that *please* us,
 " than towards those which excite *chagrin*."

It is thus the *first* part of this *unsolicited* attempt must close. What *consequences* may follow, he that has been so venturesome may live to know.
 If, instead of applause from competent judges, he
 must

must be compelled to hear the prolonged tone of well supported *censure*, he will feel as much as the *humane* could wish. Yet, even at this affecting sound, he will not *despair*. For, though such censure must, on whomsoever it falls, diminish *imaginary* worth, and may bring down appearance to reality, yet the authour of these Thoughts has, at least, sense enough to know that all this will be no disadvantage to *Society*, nor will it be any loss, with proper temper, to *himself*. Sterling worth will yet survive : for he must be poor indeed, if he acts *conscientiously*, who is in danger of losing *his all* in such a contest.—Mr. Fuller will be *respectable* should he be unable to secure his *expected* victory. Nor will he hesitate to say, that his present *Competitor* is above contempt; even though he may apprehend, that such an antagonist will ONLY give him just occasion of exerting his superiour abilities in this serious altercation.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

ERRATA.

P.	L.	
22	2	dele no.
23	26	for <i>men fin</i> , read <i>men's fin</i> .
35	28	for <i>epistle</i> , read <i>epistles</i> .
36	2	for <i>of</i> , read <i>for</i> .
50	4	dele <i>as</i> .
77	28	for <i>are</i> , read <i>is</i> .
151	8	for <i>is</i> , read <i>are</i> .
158	5	for <i>has</i> , read <i>have</i> .